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ABSTRACT

This report, the second phase of a three-phase study designed to examine the feasibility of developing evaluation models for Early Childhood Title I (ECT I) programs, describes and analyzes early childhood programs currently supported under Title I. The report is based primarily on information gained from field visits to 10 state education agencies and 29 local education agencies. Additional sources of information include the literature review from Phase I of the main study; a telephone survey of state Title I coordinators; state Title I evaluation reports for fiscal year 1976; and published descriptions of exemplary early childhood Title I programs. An introductory overview of the study and a description of the field research method are presented in Part I. The description of the ECT I programs and the current evaluation practices asscciated with those programs are outlined in Part II. Part III analyzes particular facets of ECT I practice, including the nature of ECT I programs within the broader trends of early childhood education, the needs assessment procedures related to the recruitment and selection of children for ECT I programs, the organization of the ECT I projects, and the relationship of ECT I programs to the educational and social communities in which they reside. Finally, Part IV deals with issues related to parent education. Included are a description of parent involvement activities (both as independent projects and as components of ECT I programs) and a discussion of current methods of evaluating parent involvement. Summaries of the major information categories used for collecting data and classifying existing early childhocd programs, as well as a list of the variables used when describing ECT I projects, and a guide to the acronyms and initials used in this report, are included in the appendices. (Author/MP)

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PART I. DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

CHAPTER 1. BACKGROUND OF THE REPORT

1.1 Rationale and Overview of Huron's Early Childhood Title I Project

1.2 Focus of the Report

1.3 Definition of Terms

1.4 Organization of the Report

1.1 Rationale and Overview of Huron's Early Childhood Title I Project.

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) is the primary program of federal assistance for elementary and secondary education. It provides funds to counties and school districts in order to improve the achievement of educationally deprived children living in areas with high proportions of low income families. Local education agencies are allowed considerable discretion in how they use these funds. The content and form of programs, the grade levels at which they are offered, and the instructional strategies used are up to the local education agency (LEA). ESEA does require that all programs supplement, not replace, state and local efforts; and that they address the specific needs of local populations as determined by an annual needs assessment. In practice, this results in widely varied programs reflecting the natural diversity of LEAs across the nation.

Largely in response to Congressional concern that LEAs be accountable for the programs supported under Title I, ESEA was the first major social legislation to mandate program evaluation (McLaughlin, 1975). LEAs receive funds only if they evaluate the effectiveness of programs assisted under this Title. Evaluation, however, has proved more difficult than anticipated. After a frustrating decade in which local evaluations failed to provide an adequate basis for judging the overall effectiveness of Title I, the U.S. Congress strengthened the evaluation provisions. The amendments of 1974 (P.L. 93-380) required that the Commissioner of Education:

(a) Provide for independent evaluations which describe and measure the impact of programs and projects assisted under this title.

(b) Develop and publish standards for evaluation of program or project effectiveness in achieving the objectives of this title.

(c) . . . where appropriate, consult with State agencies in order to provide for jointly sponsored objective evaluation studies of programs and projects assisted under this title within a State.

(d). . .Provide to State educational agencies, models for evaluations of all programs conducted under this title, . . .which shall include uniform procedures and criteria to be utilized by local education agencies, as well as by the State agency in the evaluations of such programs.

(e). . .Provide such technical and other assistance as may be necessary to State educational agencies to enable them to assist local educational agencies in the development and application of a systematic evaluation of programs in accordance with the models developed by the Commissioner (Section 151, Title I, as amended).

(f) Specify objective criteria which shall be utilized in the evaluation of all programs and shall outline techniques (such as longitudinal of children involved in such programs) and methodology (such as the use of tests which yield comparable results) for producing data which are comparable on a state-wide and nation-wide basis (Section 151, Title I, as amended).

To meet those requirements, the Education Department contracted with Research Management Corporation (RMC) in 1975 to develop evaluation models to be required for local evaluations and a system for state aggregation of evaluation data. RMC recommended a system with three compatible models for assessing program effectiveness: a norm-referenced design, a comparison group design, and a special regression design. Each model has two forms, one for use with nationally normed tests and the other for use with tests without national norms. Local evaluation results are aggregated across LEAs and across states by using a common metric, the normal curve equivalent (NCE), to yield an overall assessment of the effects of Title I (Tallmadge and Wood, 1976).

This evaluation system is of limited usefulness for programs serving children below the second grade, for the following reasons.

- The models are designed to assess program effectiveness only for reading, mathematics, and language arts. This range of goals is too narrow for almost all early childhood education programs, whose objectives

may include social, emotional, and psychomotor development.

- Few tests for children before the end of the first grade have adequate norms -- a basic requirement of the RMC system.
- Early childhood programs often have long-range goals, and annual evaluation is inadequate for assessing these.

Thus, the current system cannot be directly applied to programs serving children below second grade. For this reason, and because local and state education agencies have asked for help in evaluating programs for younger children, the USED awarded a contract to the Huron Institute in September, 1977 to examine the feasibility of developing evaluation models for early childhood Title I (ECT I) programs. The work was organized into three phases, with an optional fourth phase.

The first phase, a literature review (Haney et al., 1978), examined early childhood education literature in general; evaluations of federal programs for early childhood education; evaluation of Title I early childhood education programs; and the literature on tests and measurements for young children.

This report deals with the second phase of work. It is based on field research designed to document:

- The nature of current Title I early childhood education programs;
- How such programs are currently being evaluated;
- The usefulness of this information at the local and state levels;
- How additional or alternative information might be produced.

The third phase of the project integrates what we have learned from the first two and examines the feasibility of developing an evaluation system for early childhood Title I projects (Bryk, et al., 1978). In the feasibility study we analyze and report on:

- The use of past Title I evaluations, on current evaluation practices, and needs for evaluation information;
- Alternative ways of assessing the effectiveness of early childhood Title I programs;
- Ways of generating information for improving program practice;
  Special topics particularly relevant to early childhood Title I programs.

1.2 Focus of the Report

As mentioned, the present report describes and analyzes early childhood programs currently supported under Title I. It is based primarily on information gained from field visits to ten state and twenty-nine local education agencies. Additional sources include: the literature review from Phase I (Haney et al., 1978), a telephone survey of state Title I coordinators, state Title I evaluation reports for fiscal year 1976 and exemplary early childhood Title I programs described in Educational Programs That Work (1977).

1.3 Definition of Terms

Before we proceed, we wish to clarify some potentially confusing terms. For purposes of this report we define early childhood education to mean programs serving children in first grade, kindergarten, and prekindergarten. We are including parent education programs provided for the caretaking of these children. Note that our use of the term is narrower than the definition proposed in the combined glossary of the National Center for Educational Statistics (1974, p. 43), which includes programs up through the third grade, and broader than another definition (preschool programs for children age zero through five) common in some educational circles.

Second, we must distinguish between "parent involvement" and "parent education." Parent involvement refers to parent participation in the planning, administration, instruction, or evaluation of educational programs; parent education refers to efforts to improve parental capacities for instructing or, more generally, raising their children. This distinction is important, because Title I mandates some forms of parent involvement but does not require parent education. Each LEA must establish a district Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and an advisory council for each school served by the program.[1] PACs are given responsibility for "advising the LEA in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of such programs or projects" (Federal Register, 41:189, section 116a 25). By parent education, however, we refer to activities designed to change parents' behavior towards their child and foster greater interest in its education.

Third, we have tried to distinguish between the terms "project" and "program." According to Tallmadge and Wood (1976, p. 1), a project is " a set of methods, materials, personnel and activities that define an instructional treatment which is judged to be uniform for all those it serves." Program refers to an administrative unit defined in terms of funding. In some cases a Title I project may be clearly defined by the funding application; but where there are "several qualitively different instructional treatments . . .the term project is reserved for the individual treatments and not for the funded composite." Thus, an LEA with three separately administered components, each serving prekindergarten children, is considered to have three prekindergarten projects; but if the three are funded jointly, they form a single program. Similarly, an LEA might have

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[1] Exceptions may be made in the latter case if the LEA has less than 1,000 children enrolled in its project area schools, or has only one project area school. In such cases, the LEA may, with the consent of the SEA, have the district advisory council also serve as the school council.

a coordinated Title I reading program for grades one through three and a separate Title I prekindergarten project.

1.4 Organization of the Report

This report is organized into four parts. Part I consists of this chapter and chapter 2, which describes the field research of the second phase of our study. Part II describes early childhood Title I programs (chapter 3) and the current evaluation practices associated with those programs (chapter 4). Part III analyzes particular facets of ECT I practice: the nature of ECT I programs within the broader trends of early childhood education (Chapter 5); the processes for needs assessments and selection of children to participate in ECT I programs (Chapter 6); the organization of ECT I projects (Chapter 7); and the relations of ECT I programs with the educational and social communities in which they reside (Chapter 8). Finally, Part IV deals with issues of parent education. Chapter 9 describes parent involvement activities both as independent projects and as components of ECT I programs. Chapter 10 discusses current practices of evaluating parent involvement.

CHAPTER 2. DESCRIPTION OF FIELD RESEARCH

2.1 Selecting Field Visit Sites

2.1.1 Selecting State Education Agencies

2.1.2 Selecting the Local Education Agencies

2.2 Characteristics of the Sample Visited

2.3 Conduct and Reporting of Field Visits

2.4 Analyzing and Generalizing from Field Research Data

2.1 Selecting Field Visit Sites

In this study we could not visit all ECT I programs. Indeed, the request for this study by the USED (RFP-77-79) stipulated that ten states and three school districts within each state should be visited. We thus had a difficult selection task.

To generalize findings from a sample to the broader population, the method preferred is random sampling. For this project, however, random sampling was neither feasible nor especially desirable. For random or other probabilistic sampling, one needs a well-defined population from which to sample. This is impossible for ECT I programs, since there is no comprehensive list of the number of school district programs that operate ECT I projects. Furthermore, from the outset we had evidence of considerable diversity in the types and number of ECT I projects around the country. A random sampling of thirty school districts operating Title I programs would have precluded an exposition of this diversity.

As a result, we chose a sampling strategy based on several principles. First, we required diversity in the states to be visited, and local education agencies that served both urban and rural populations and different ethnic groups. Second, we wished to visit states and LEAs investing substantial Title I resources in their ECT I program. From our review of reports*

*NIE Interm Report Evaluating Compensatory Education Programs, Hill and Rotberg 1976; Gamel et al., 1975; Summary Tables of the Annual State Performance and Accounting Reports prepared by the Division of Education for the Disadvantaged, fiscal years 1975, 1976, and 1977.

and our preliminary telephone survey of Title I directors, we found wide variation from state to state in the number and types of early childhood programs. We then identified states and localities investing substantial resources in ECT I.

Third, we wished to identify sites conducting evaluations of ECT I programs. This was important because the aims of the field research included documentation of ECT I evaluation practices and determination of evaluation needs concerning such practices.

The following two sections describe how we applied these selection principles.

2.1.1 Selecting State Education Agencies (SEAs). As a first step in selecting our sample, we reviewed 1976 SEA Title I Evaluation Reports. We looked for SEAs with substantial early childhood program activity which was either increasing or at least stable over time. Concurrently, we examined data from the state Performance and Accounting Reports for fiscal years 1975-76. A difficulty in using these sources was that most states simply do not disaggregate information on Title I in ways compatible with our investigation. For example, the Performance and Accounting Reports summarize data according to the following grade-level spans: prekindergarten to kindergarten; grades 1 through 6; and grades 7 through 12. Enrollment figures for grade 1 alone are not reported. We therefore estimated emphasis on ECT 1 programs in terms of the proportion of participants enrolled in Title I programs at the prekindergarten and kindergarten levels (Haney et al., 1978, p. 57).

Table 2.1 shows the total number of children enrolled in Title I programs and the number and percentage of children enrolled in preschool/kindergarten activities for fiscal years 1975 and 1976. In 1976, approximately 8% of the Title I participants were in prekindergarten/kindergarten programs.

Participation varied widely across states. In some states, fewer than 1% of the Title I students were in prekindergarten/kindergarten programs; in others, as many as 27%.[1]

Using these figures, we identified states in which more than 10% of the Title I participants in 1976 were in prekindergarten/kindergarten programs. We produced a similar list from data contained in state Title I reports from fiscal year 1976. The two lists largely tallied. We also telephoned state Title I directors to obtain more current information. In brief interviews, we discussed with them the relative importance of early childhood programs in their states, the types of current programs, the kinds of evaluations conducted, and how they were used. We also asked for their best judgment on future directions of ECT I programs in their states.

Combining information from the three sources yielded a list of twenty-one states in which there was substantial activity in ECT I programs: Alabama, Alaska, California, Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Wisconsin, and the District of Columbia. We examined each state further in terms of our selection principles (e.g., looking for geographic and demographic coverage). We also consulted with the USED project officer, a representative of the USED Title I Program Office, representatives of Technical Assistance Centers (TACs), members of our consultant panel, and members of our field research teams who had experience working with state education agencies. On that basis, we developed the following priorities for states to visit: Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Iowa, New Jersey,

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[1] In terms of absolute numbers, the state with the most children enrolled in prekindergarten/kindergarten Title I programs was undoubtedly California, although the 1976 Performance and Accounting Report for California was not available at the time we began our investigation.

Table 2.1

Title I Participation by State for Fiscal Years 1975 and 1976: Prekindergarten, Kindergarten and Total (Pre-K to Grade 12)

STATE	FISCAL YEAR 1975			FISCAL YEAR 1976		
	TOTAL (PRE-K - 12)	PRE-K - K	%PRE-K - K	TOTAL (PRE-K - 12)	PRE-K - K	%PRE-K - K
TOTALS	4,524,530	360,602	.08	5,055,383	404,483	.08
Alabama	146,866	7,960	.05	143,170	9,187	.06
Alaska	5,191	860	.17	5,501	1,015	.18
Arizona	41,299	2,762	.07	56,097	4,561	.08
Arkansas	68,429	1,282	.02	70,223	1,848	.03
California	601,968	85,245	.14	NA	NA	NA
Colorado	36,646	2,090	.06	NA	NA	NA
Connecticut	36,650	447	.01	51,193	8,108	.16
Delaware				9,364	1,038	.11
Florida	122,419	7,504	.06	148,787	11,369	.08
Georgia	141,430	13,809	.10	122,721	16,117	.13
Hawaii	8,237	627	.08	10,234	791	.08
Idaho	18,379	1,037	.06	14,862	124	.01
Illinois	171,280	16,566	.10	169,902	16,575	.10
Indiana	107,909	8,159	.08	NA	NA	NA
Iowa	60,966	-	-	56,313	1,665	.03
Kansas	34,335	2,758	.08	33,407	1,398	.04
Kentucky	114,792	5,326	.05	112,757	4,971	.04
Louisiana	127,317	7,351	.06	150,402	10,309	.07
Maine	30,088	2,629	.09	31,373	2,113	.07
Maryland	NA	NA	NA	63,055	12,445	.20
Massachusetts	77,129	10,706	.14	67,057	9,278	.14
Michigan	127,172	19,593	.15	NA	NA	NA
Minnesota	58,207	6,411	.11	71,354	4,400	.06
Mississippi	139,942	1,081	.01	121,429	1,171	.01
Missouri	76,840	4,736	.06	83,312	5,343	.06
Montana	7,893	60	.01	11,313	85	.01
Nebraska	35,737	1,809	.05	31,445	953	.03
Nevada	2,446	--	.00	5,502	120	.02
New Hampshire	6,415	225	.04	7,000	150	.02
New Jersey	92,464	11,889	.13	103,508	15,005	.14
New Mexico	22,868	4,614	.20	28,441	4,422	.16
New York	503,350	25,689	.05	419,540	10,005	.02
North Carolina	133,161	11,554	.09	129,899	9,338	.07
North Dakota	14,856	--	.00	14,081	75	.01
Ohio	130,361	13,069	.10	132,938	13,331	.10
Oklahoma	79,496	140	.00	94,155	180	.00
Oregon	40,867	2,284	.06	47,400	2,962	.06
Pennsylvania	251,208	13,284	.05	279,371	18,755	.07
Rhode Island	10,872	71	.00	25,252	288	.01
South Carolina	144,876	5,110	.04	133,124	3,512	.03
South Dakota	19,600	2,177	.11	18,814	898	.05
Tennessee	NA	NA	NA	122,550	6,963	.06
Texas	317,633	32,739	.10	408,765	39,833	.10
Utah	15,752	1,531	.10	18,283	2,332	.13
Vermont	12,660	1,366	.11	13,055	1,306	.10
Virginia	109,161	2,828	.03	100,987	4,742	.05
Washington	79,305	3,316	.04	68,685	3,831	.05
West Virginia	42,915	40	.00	42,913	38	.00
Wisconsin	53,137	14,749	.28	61,973	16,469	.27
Wyoming	5,377	224	.04	3,323	--	.00
District of Columbia	17,000	2,550	.15	18,400	3,220	.18
American Samoa	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Guam	1,245	--	.00	1,250	--	.00
Puerto Rico	NA	NA	NA	234,812	6,574	.03
Trust Territory	17,269	NA	.00	7,987	20	.00
Virgin Islands	1,735	245	.14	NA	NA	NA

Source: "Fiscal Year 1975 Performance Reports - Total Number of Children Participating" and "ESEA Title I - Number of Children Participating by Grade Level - Fiscal Year 1976", Summary Tables of the Annual State Performance and Accounting Reports, prepared by Division of Education for the Disadvantaged, copies obtained from Jim Ogura. Excludes participation state institutions. NA means data not available.

Ohio, Texas, and Wisconsin. We also chose four additional candidate states in case we were unable to visit some of the first group.

We sent a letter of introduction to the chief state school officers and state Title I directors in each of the first ten states, requesting permission to visit. All agreed to participate. We then made contact with appropriate state Title I personnel who helped us to identify local education agencies and obtain permission to visit them.

2.1.2 Selecting Local Education Agencies. The procedure for selecting LEAs was similar. The first step was to consult with the Title I director in each state. We asked for a list of LEAs that met one or more of the following criteria:

- LEAs with programs at the first grade, kindergarten, and/or prekindergarten levels that SEA staff thought were in some way outstanding;
- Sites in which the SEA official felt staff were particularly knowledgeable;
- LEAs with ECT I evaluation activities that seemed particularly promising;
- LEAs having ECT I programs in several demographic categories, such as urban and rural.

All other things being equal, we also desired sites with program components at each ECT I level: prekindergarten, kindergarten, and first grade.

Each state Title I director suggested five or six candidate LEAs and briefly described the programs. We excluded LEAs that state officials thought would not be receptive to our visit. On the basis of this information, we selected the final set of LEAs to visit.

2.2 Characteristics of the Sample Visited

Altogether we visited twenty-nine local education agencies in the states selected (including Washington, D.C.). Table 2.2 shows their demographic characteristics and Title I administrative structure. Almost half of them (45%) are urban communities with populations of more than 100,000. Of these, all but one administer their programs through a single city school district; only Mobile, Alabama, is part of a regional administrative structure that includes several separate communities. LEAs with populations of less than 50,000 comprise 34% of our sample. Most serve rural areas, although both Teaneck and Linden, New Jersey, are suburban communities. Half are administered as part of a larger regional system, half through a single city school district. The remaining six LEAs (21%) are small urban communities with between 50,000 and 100,000 inhabitants. Two communities in our sample (Scottsdale, Arizona and Midland, Texas) are extremely heterogeneous economically, with a substantial proportion of both very poor and very affluent families.

All of the LEAs we visited concentrated Title I funds on levels below the fourth grade. All, of course, had at least one program at the early childhood level, that is, prekindergarten through first grade. Table 2.3 shows the different combinations of programs over prekindergarten, kindergarten, and first grade.

2.3 Conduct and Reporting of Field Visits

Each site visit was made by a team of two experienced interviewers, one of them knowledgeable in program evaluation and the other in early childhood education. In sites where much of the population was expected to be Spanish-speaking (Arizona and Texas), one member of the research team was Hispanic. Visits in each state lasted from five to fourteen days. In most states, interviews at the state education agency were conducted first. These involved one or two days of discussions with chief state school officers

Table 2.2

Demographic Characteristics and Title I Administrative Structure of LEAs Visited

SITE	POPULATION FIGURES[1]			ADMIN. STRUCTURE		EARLY CHILDHOOD TITLE I PROGRAMS			
	>100,000	50-100,000	<50,000	City	District or Regional	Pre-kindergarten	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Parent Education
ALABAMA[2] Birmingham	+			+			+	+	+
Butler County			+		+		+	+	
Mobile	+				+		+	+	
ARIZONA[3] Mammoth-San Manuel			+		+	+	+		
Phoenix	+			+				+	+
Scottsdale		+		+		+	+	+	+
Tucson	+			+		+	+	+	+
COLORADO Commerce City			+	+		+	+	+	+
Denver	+			+		+	+	+	+
Fort Collins[5]			+		+	+	+	+	+
CONNECTICUT Bridgeport	+			+		+	+	+	+
Hartford	+			+		+	+		+
Suffield			+		+	+	+		+
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	+			+		+	+	+	
IOWA *Cedar Rapids	+			+		+	+	+	
Des Moines	+			+		+	+	+	
*Sioux City		+		+		+	+		
NEW JERSEY[2] Linden			+	+		+	+	+	
East Orange		+		+		+	+	+	
Teaneck			+	+		+	+		
OHIO Columbus	+			+		+	+	+	
Dayton	+			+		+	+	+	
Zanesville			+	+				+	
TEXAS[2] Dallas	+			+				+	+
Del Rio			+		+			+	
Midland		+		+				+	
WISCONSIN La Crosse		+		+		+	+	+	
Oconomowoc			+	+		+	+	+	+
Racine[5]		+			+	+	+	+	+
TOTALS	13	6	10	22	7	20	23	25	13

*Site-visit data incomplete; data are reported here only on projects actually observed.

1 Based on 1970 Census of Population, Table 6
2 1975 population
3 1976 Special Census Count
4 1974 population
5 1970 figure is approaching the level of the next category

Table 2.3

Early Childhood Title I Programs
by Local Education Agency

EARLY CHILDHOOD GRADE LEVELS INCLUDED	FREQUENCY	PERCENT OF SAMPLE
Prekindergarten, Kindergarten, and Grade I	14	48
Kindergarten and Grade I	6	21
Prekindergarten and Grade I	3	11
Prekindergarten and Kindergarten	1	3
Prekindergarten only	3	11
Kindergarten only	1	3
Grade I only	1	3
TOTAL	29	100

or their representatives, Title I directors, and persons responsible for the administration and evaluation of early childhood Title I programs. We interviewed as wide a range of administrative personnel as possible in order to cover as many perspectives as we could.

After interviews at the SEA, the research team visited each local education agency in that state for about two days.[2] In five states they were accompanied by an SEA representative. Each visit consisted in classroom observations and in-depth semi-structured interviews with a wide variety of staff--the school superintendent or his representative, the director of federal programs and the Title I director, project directors, evaluation staff, teachers, aides, and parents. Many interviews were held individually; some were done in groups. At the end of each site visit, we scheduled an "exit" session to resolve any questions that remained unanswered, to give those interviewed a chance to ask questions of us, and to thank officials for their help.

All the interviews were semi-structured--that is, we followed no predetermined format. Nevertheless, all field visitors were instructed to gather information on the following seven topics:*

1. Program Context
2. Description of Program Goals and Structure
3. Selection Procedures
4. Parent Involvement
5. Current Formal Evaluation Procedures
6. Current Users and Uses of Information
7. Needs, Capacities, and Incentives for Additional Evaluation Information.

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[2] In some of the smaller LEAs, one day was enough. In all of the larger, we extended our visit to three days.

* For a fuller description of these topics and the information sought within each, see appendix A.

While the topics were not necessarily taken up in this order, field researchers tried to obtain information relevant to each topic in each interview.

Occasionally, interviews departed from the ideal. Because of the relatively short time spent in each LEA (generally two days), we often had no chance to interview parents. When we did, we usually spoke with only a few, generally in the presence of SEA or LEA staff. The parents we did interview were selected by LEA personnel, because they were official representatives of the local Parent Advisory Council, or were judged to be particularly active, or were simply the only parents available at the time of our visit. For these reasons, our data likely do not fully represent parent perspectives on these programs.

SEA representatives were often present at our interviews with LEA staff. While SEA-LEA relations generally seemed quite cordial, it is possible that under such conditions LEA personnel may have been somewhat less than candid, especially on issues that might touch on their compliance with regulations. The same thing may hold for interviews with program staff that were conducted in the presence of program directors.

Finally, our observations of these programs were generally limited to issues of program delivery and evaluation. We did not examine program budgets, child records, or other administrative data that relate to compliance with official regulations. We tried to make very clear to all those interviewed that such issues were beyond the scope of our study.

None of our interviews were recorded. Instead, field visitors took notes on interviews and their observations. At the end of field visits, or where possible at the end of each day of interviewing, they dictated field visit reports, organized according to the seven topics mentioned above. After the reports were typed, they were reviewed by at least one senior staff member at Huron, and field visitors were asked to clarify ambiguities or fill

in gaps. In addition, field visitors were asked to obtain any available written descriptions of ECT I programs and evaluations. From the field reports and other material, case summaries for each state and LEA visited were drafted and sent to the relevant officials for their review. They were then edited and are appended to this report.

2.4 Analyzing and Generalizing from Field Research Data

In preparing this report we have drawn on three types of information. First is general literature on Title I and early childhood education. Much of this was summarized and analyzed in the first phase of our project (Haney, et al., 1978), but additional literature has come to our attention since. Second is information gathered in field research, in the form of both field visit reports and the case summaries prepared from them. Third are written descriptions of ECT I programs acquired by our field staff. Ideally, all three types of information would have been available on all of the programs treated in this report. In fact, however, our coverage is less even. As mentioned, field visitors did not always have access to all the informants we would have liked to talk to. Also, the amount of written information available on ECT I programs varied markedly across LEAs.

In analyzing the information we obtained on the ECT I programs we visited, we simply compared information across all relevant cases on particular issues--for example, grade levels served or selection procedures. We tried to note both general patterns with regard to particular issues, and exceptions to those patterns. Before describing the findings from this analysis (chapter 3) we should reiterate a note of caution. It should be kept in mind in reading this report that the Title I programs we visited were selected precisely because they did have ECT I projects or components. Therefore, the frequency of particular types of ECT I programs or practices reported here cannot safely be generalized

to the broader population of Title I programs.

Nevertheless, we are confident that our study encompasses a fairly wide spectrum of current ECT I programs throughout the country. Also, we are confident that we have a fairly accurate and complete description of services delivered and evaluation practices in the sites we visited. Our practice of sending case summaries to state and local officials for review helped to insure accuracy. We are somewhat less confident about the comprehensiveness and validity of information directly pertinent to Title I rules and regulations--such as selection procedures, needs assessment, Parent Advisory Councils, and use of evaluation results--for two reasons. First, several of these issues bear directly on compliance with Title I regulations. We intentionally did not inquire into these issues, lest local personnel take our visits as efforts by state or federal Title I offices to monitor compliance. The second reason why our information on these issues is limited is that we could not directly observe participant selection, needs assessment, Parent Advisory Councils and use of evaluation information. Our findings on these issues are thus based strictly on the descriptions and observations of those we interviewed and on pertinent written material.

CHAPTER 3. DESCRIBING EARLY CHILDHOOD TITLE 1 PROGRAMS

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Variables for Describing ECT I Projects

3.3 Description of ECT I Programs

3.3.1 Prekindergarten Projects

3.3.2 First Grade Programs

3.3.3 Kindergarten Programs

3.1 Introduction

In attempting to describe ECT I projects and programs, we first considered existing classifications of early childhood and early elementary educational programs. These included:

- SRI International's classification of Follow Through models,
- Harvard Center for Educational Policy Research's (1971) description of Title I projects,
- White et al.'s (1973) classification of compensatory education programs,
- Kohlberg's (1968) differentiation of educational programs in terms of their theoretical base,
- Bissell's (1971) description of Head Start Planned Variation models,
- Weikart's (1971) classification of preschool projects,
- Bussis and Chittenden's (1970) categories for describing elementary programs,
- Mayer's (1971) classification of preschool projects.

These classification schemes encompass a wide range of characteristics of early education programs, including philosophy, goals, organization, and roles played by child, teacher and parent. Nevertheless, we decided that none of them taken individually would be adequate for describing ECT I programs. None of them directly takes into account all of the major ways in which we found ECT I programs and projects to vary. Indeed, even taken together these schemes do not encompass all of the important dimensions of ECT I activity.

However, the review of classifications was useful in suggesting a number of variables salient to any descriptive effort. These are discussed briefly in the next section. Readers interested in more detailed descriptions are referred to Appendix B of this chapter.

3.2 Variables for Describing ECT I Projects

Grade Level

Prekindergarten. These are instructional activities that occur during the year or years before kindergarten. They are part of the elementary school program and are under the direction of a professionally qualified teacher. In most cases the classes are for four-year-olds. In some they include programs for two-, three- and/or four-year-olds.

Kindergarten. These are programs that provide educational experience for children one year before first grade.

First Grade. These are programs that follow kindergarten. They are often the first step of the required school academic sequence.

Goals and Objectives. These are the overall program aims as listed on applications and evaluation reports and described to our field research teams.

Subject-specific objectives. These are objectives related to reading, reading readiness, language arts, or mathematics.

Developmental objectives. These are objectives for progress in broad developmental areas such as social, emotional, psychomotor, cognitive, and language acquisition.

Primary Program Recipients

Child-centered programs. These programs deal only with the child.

Parent programs. These programs deal with educational activities for parents, hoping to influence children indirectly through them.

Parent and child programs. These programs identify the skills and abilities the children need to succeed in school, then devise coordinated instruction plans for parents and child to work together toward them.

Program Locus. Early childhood projects may be center- or classroom-based, home-based, or a combination of the two.

Frequency. This refers to the number of times per week or month the program meets.

Duration. Duration refers to the amount of instruction time planned for each teaching session.

Staff:Child Ratio. This is the ratio of regularly available staff to children as reported by program personnel.

Instructional Organization

Self-contained classrooms. Children and teachers spend most or all of the school day together in various work and play activities.

Extended day programs. These provide supplementary instruction periods after the regular school day has ended.

Pull-out programs. Selected children are taken from their regular classroom for short periods (usually less than one hour) on a regular basis.

Floating teachers. Instead of taking Title-I-eligible children from their classes, some programs elect to send an instructional specialist into the classrooms.

Resource rooms. These are equipped with materials relevant to a special subject area. They differ from pull-out programs in that the entire class visits the resource room, not just the Title-I-eligible children.

Home visits. These are regular teaching sessions for parents and children in their home.

Parent groups. These may be discussion and/or instruction sessions that allow parents to talk with other parents, offering mutual support as well as instruction.

Title I Instructional Staff.

Teachers

Classroom aides

Special subject teachers

Special subject aides

Resource teachers

Resource center aides

Home visitors

3.3 Description of ECT I Programs

The results of both our field research and the literature review suggest that there are major differences in Title I first-grade, kindergarten, and prekindergarten projects. Starting with the prekindergarten, we will discuss each of them in turn.

3.3.1 Prekindergarten Projects. Table 3.1 summarizes our data on the characteristics of the prekindergarten projects we visited.[1] We found that prekindergarten projects tend to be alike in several ways. First, most are separate entities only peripherally related to programs in later grades. Many originated under other funding sources (Title III, state compensatory education funds, Head Start, or Community Action Programs) and then were assumed under Title I. Second, the main objectives of most ECT-I prekindergartens are to increase readiness in one or more academic subjects such as language, reading, and arithmetic. Most also address a wider range of developmental skills, including cognitive, social, psychomotor, gross motor, organizational, and attitudinal. The former are often specified in detail; the latter are usually vaguely expressed. Since the overriding long-term objective of virtually all Title I prekindergarten programs is to prepare children for school entry and to prevent academic deficits, pre-academic readiness skills are among every project's goals. However, readiness is often broadly defined and implemented within a developmental and social context. A sample of typical prekindergarten program objectives is presented in Table 3.2. There seemed to be a tension between ensuring academic readiness as discussed in program documents and general developmental goals articulated by program personnel. The issues underlying this tension are discussed in chapter 7.

[1] Because we did not use representative samples, we cannot make firm inferences from these findings about the national frequency of the various program types. At the same time, because the sample was deliberately chosen to include as wide a range of program activity as possible, this study is useful in defining the range of programs that constitute ECT I program universe.

Table 3.1

Structural Characteristics of the Prekindergarten Projects

SITE	PROJECT TITLE	PRIMARY RECIPIENT			LOCUS OF PROGRAM			FREQUENCY				DURATION				STAFF/CHILD RATIO				ORGANIZATION FOR INSTRUCTION								# CHILD PER CLS.	STAFF						
		Child	Parent	Child & Parent	Center	Home	Home & Center	Daily	2 to 4 Times Per Week	Weekly	< Weekly	> 3 Hours Per Session	2 to 3 Hrs. Per Session	1 Hour Per Session	< 1 Hour Per Session	1:1	1:2-1:5	1:6-1:10	> 1:10	Self-Contained Classroom	Supplementary Session	Pull-Out	Floating Teacher	Resource Room	Multi-age Grouping	Home Visits	Parent Groups		Teacher	Classroom Aide	Special Subject Teacher	Special Subject Aide	Resource Teacher	Resource Center Staff
ALABAMA																																		
Birmingham (1)																																		
Butler County (1)																																		
Mobile																																		
ARIZONA																																		
Mammoth-San Manuel	Home Specified	X			X			X				X						X		X						X			12	X	X				
Phoenix (1)																																		
Scottsdale	Project SPIRE			X			X	X				X						X		X						X			12	X	X				
	Home-based SPIRE		X			X				X			X			X										X			NR	X					
Tucson	Parent and Child Education Program			X			X			X		X					X	X		X						X				X	X(4)				
COLORADO																																		
Commerce City	Parents as Teachers			X						X			X			X										X			NR		X				
Denver (2)	Early Childhood Education Project			X			X	X				X						X		X						X			20	X	X				
	Home Education and Learning Project		X							X			X			X										X			NR	X	X				
	Home-based Parent Education			X		X				X			X			X										X			NR		X				
Foudre River I (2)	Home Specified	X			X			X				X						X		X									20-25	X	X				
	Home Visit Program			X		X				X			X			X										X			NR		X				

(1) No Title I project was implemented in pre-kindergarten in FY 77
(2) More than one project was implemented at this grade level. Projects are reported separately
(3) Field research data is incomplete. Data is reported here only on projects actually observed
(4) Parents' aides also present

Table 3.1 (continued)

SITE	PROJECT TITLE	PRIMARY RECIPIENT			LOCUS OF PROGRAM			FREQUENCY				DURATION				STAFF/CHILD RATIO				ORGANIZATION FOR INSTRUCTION								# CHILD PER CLS.	STAFF						
		Child	Parent	Child & Parent	Center	Home	Home & Center	Daily	2 to 4 Times Per Week	Weekly	< Weekly	> 3 Hours Per Session	2 to 3 Hrs. Per Session	1 Hour Per Session	< 1 Hour Per Session	1:1	1:2-1:5	1:6-1:10	> 1:10	Self-Contained Classroom	Supplementary Session	Pull-Out	Floating Teacher	Resource Room	Multi-age Grouping	Home Visits	Parent Groups		Teacher	Classroom Aide	Special Subject Teacher	Special Subject Aide	Resource Teacher	Resource Center Staff
CONNECTICUT																																		
Bridgeport (2)	Little Schools	X			X			X					X					X		X								20	X	X				
Hartford (2)	Library Resource			X		X				X				X		X				X				X				NR	X	X				
	Library Resource Proj.	X		X				X					X			X				X						X		NR	X	X				
	School Readiness Proj.			X		X					X			X				X								X		18-20	X	X				
Suffield	Very Early AMISA			X		X					X			X												X			X					
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	None Specified	X			X			X				X	X					X		X								20	X	X				
IOWA																																		
Cedar Rapids	None Specified			X			X		X				X					X		X					X			16-18	X					
Des Moines	Early Learning Ctr.	X			X				X				X					X		X								15	X	X				
Sioux City (3)																																		
NEW JERSEY																																		
East Orange	None Specified	X			X			X					X					X		X								11-17	X	X				
Linden	Reading Instruct. Proj.	X			X			X					X					X		X					X			14-16	X	X				
Teaneck	None Specified	X			X			X					X				X			X								10-12	X	X				
OHIO																																		
Columbus	None Specified	X			X			X					X					X		X								16-18	X	X				
Dayton	Early Childhood Ed.	X			X			X					X					X										16-18	X	X				
Zanesville (1)																																		
TEXAS																																		
Dallas (1)																																		
Del Rio	None Specified				X			X				X						X		X					X			25	X	X			X	
Midland (1)																																		
WISCONSIN																																		
La Crosse	None Specified	X			X			X					X				X			X								10	X	X				
Oconomowoc	None Specified			X	X				X				X				X			X								15	X	X(2)				
Racine	None Specified			X	X					X			X				X			X							X	12 Families	X	X				

Table 3.2 A Sample of ECT I Prekindergarten Goals

DOMAIN	OBJECTIVES
	Children will demonstrate:
Language Arts	. A greater degree of language facility as measured by a specified improvement on a given test . Improved sentence structure . Improved vocabulary and knowledge of word meaning . Improved language skills . Improved language concepts . Improved communication skills, including listening, speaking, pre-reading and pre-writing . Improved ability to comprehend, interpret and recall oral language
Mathematics	. Understanding of early mathematics concepts as measured by a given test . Ability to understand the vocabulary of beginning mathematics . Ability to recognize geometric shapes . Ability to recognize numbers . Ability to count objects . Ability to compare similarities and differences . Ability to serialize objects . Ability to classify objects . Improved math concepts . Improved understanding of spatial relationships . Improved understanding to sequence objects and/or events
Cognitive Development	. Progress in concept development as measured by a given test . General concept development . Improved cognitive and intellectual competence . Ability to think clearly . Ability to use problem solving strategies and logical reasoning . Ability to test ideas
Readiness	. Increased school readiness . Attitudes and skills necessary to function in school . Improved pre-reading skills . Improved pre-mathematics skills
Social/Emotional Development	. Positive change in affective behavior as reported by measures of affective growth . Self confidence . Positive self concept (self image) . Ability to accept himself and others . Ability to feel and respond to any situation appropriately . That they know how to love and be loved . Ability to cope with sadness and disappointment . Ability to discriminate between acceptable and unacceptable behavior . Ability to manage anxiety, anger and jealousy, as well as more positive emotions . Improved skill in social interaction . Positive attitudes toward self, friends, class and school . Positive attitudes and values . Responsibility and independence
Motivation	. Love of learning . Motivational development
Behavioral Organization	. Improved memory . Ability to exercise the will . Ability to use self discipline . Ability to concentrate . Ability to set goals and initiate actions to complete them . Ability to persevere until tasks are completed . Increased attention span
Perceptual Motor Development	. Growth in psychomotor development as reported by measures of psychomotor development . Ability to perceive accurately, using the senses to efficiently process information . Improved fine motor skills . Improved visual/motor perception . Improved auditory discrimination . Ability to demonstrate mastery in skills in the areas of small muscr, laterality, directionality and coordination . Ability to write numerals, letters and words
Motor Development	. Ability to move and gain maximal control over voluntary muscles . Improved gross motor functions . Improved motor development . Improved self care skills . Improved coordination . Ability to use and control a pencil, crayons and scissors

Third, all the prekindergarten programs we visited stress home-school coordination. Although a few projects concentrate on the child, most focus on parent and child together. Generally, the younger the child, the greater the emphasis on the parents' role. Program personnel believe that parents can be their child's best teachers, and parent education is usually a major program component. The goal of most ECT I parent education activities is to change parental knowledge, attitudes, and functioning toward their child and toward the education system. Program personnel encourage parents both to take a more active and direct role in educating their child, and to become more involved in the child's school program. The nature of parent education programs, their goals and objectives, and implementation issues are considered further in chapter 9. Most prekindergarten programs were center-based or home-based; in several LEAs the program included both a home-based and a center-based project.

Center-based projects. Most of the prekindergartens we visited are classroom based housed either in the public schools or in nearby church or public facilities. Most classes meet daily for two and a half to three hours; a few have all-day programs. Classes are self-contained and teachers are given considerable latitude in what and how they teach. As one administrator said, "We make resources available but they decide what they are going to teach." In large LEAs with more than one prekindergarten class, a project coordinator usually assumes responsibility for curriculum consistency and quality control. Prekindergarten classes are usually staffed by certified teachers and at least one aide. Most aides are paraprofessionals, although one program employed eligible but unemployed teachers; some programs also use parent aides. Classes are small. In the sites we visited, twenty was the official maximum,

and groups were often smaller. Program staff in several sites reported both high absentee rates and high population mobility. The combination of small classes and high absenteeism reduced the adult:child ratio in many classes from the planned 1:10 to 1:6 or 1:7 and thus increased the intensity of the program. Most projects have their own room, although some share space with other groups. For example, in two LEAs, several prekindergarten classes are housed in church Sunday School rooms that are used for church activities on weekends. In another, afternoon prekindergarten classes share rooms with morning kindergartens.

In most prekindergartens, we found a wealth of material organized into interest or activity areas with varying degrees of imagination and skill. The material reflects both academic and general developmental goals. A typical classroom includes a housekeeping area (equipped, for example, with a stove, a refrigerator, and a small table, as well as pots, pans, dishes, and the like), a dress-up or make-believe area with costumes, a block area, an area in which trucks, cars, and other large vehicles are ready for use, and a science or nature area. There is also a manipulative area (with toys for stringing, stacking, lacing, matching, and other skills requiring manual dexterity and the coordinated use of eyes and hands); a puzzle area, and a library or reading area. Word and number games, stories, signs, and other activities involving the use of symbols are common. In some of the more elaborately equipped classrooms, reading machines and tape recorders are available for independent use. In most classes, children move freely from area to area; in some they are encouraged to plan their activities by specifying where they will play for certain periods of the day.

Finally, only a few of the center-based prekindergarten projects we saw have adopted a curriculum developed elsewhere. Several have adapted other programs to what they regard as the unique needs of their population, and many have written their own programs.

Home-based projects. These projects derive from the mother-child interaction programs of the late 1960s, such as the Verbal Interaction Project (Levenstein, 1971) and the Far West Laboratory's Toy Lending Library (Nimnicht, 1970). Most have changed the material and sequences of these programs and added activities of their own. The goals of home-visit projects are twofold: to improve parents' ability to teach their child, and to increase the child's readiness for school. Readiness is in most cases defined broadly and includes not only academic skills but also social competence, behavioral organization, perceptual motor skills, and language development.

Teachers/home visitors meet regularly with parents and children in their homes. Visits may take place as often as once a week. They usually last for forty-five minutes to an hour, and include two kinds of activities: direct instruction for the child, and parent instruction. They may also involve general conversation about issues of interest to parent or teacher. The home visitor generally brings toys and teaching materials to the lesson. These may include a simple puzzle, a letter recognition game, a counting game, scissors, crayons, paper, and a book. The home visitor invites the child to work with her or him and urges the parent to watch. Some home visitors involve the parent continuously; others allow her to remain an observer. The home visitor reviews with the child what he or she has done since the previous lesson and then introduces new material. Concurrently, she or he explains to the parent what she is doing and points out teaching techniques

that the mother might use. When she has completed her scheduled activities or when the child seems to be tiring, the home visitor turns her attention to the mother. She reviews what she has done, suggests additional activities, reinforces the mother's own skill, and generally serves as a resource for the mother.

For example, in one home visit we attended, the home visitor had been working with the child and mother for several weeks on letter recognition. She spent the first part of her visit playing a game in which the child turned over a letter, matched it to a model, and told its name. Next, she and the child read an alphabet book together, identifying each letter that appeared and discussing the names of the pictures on each page. She frequently drew the mother into the conversation to show her pictures or ask her to name objects. When they finished the story, she talked about the places the mother might find letters to talk about (cereal boxes, signs, and the like). Finally, the mother produced a large alphabet chart she had been coloring all week. This home visitor had left such a chart with each family she visited. She proposed that, when finished, they be laminated and used as wall decorations.

Most home visit programs were for three-year-olds, although a few included four-year-olds. We found them in both rural and urban communities. In several rural LEAs, home-based projects served families in outlying areas for whom transportation problems precluded regular school attendance.

Several home-visit projects were only one component of a larger prekindergarten program. Some LEAs had both a home-visit project and a center-based project. In most cases, families moved from the home project to the school project when their child became four years old. In several LEAs, home-based projects served only the most needy children--those who had the lowest screening scores or were judged by program personnel to be most

in need. In a few cases, the children were simultaneously enrolled in the home-based projects and a Title I (or otherwise funded) center-based program.

We visited one home-based project that was quite different from those described above. This LEA used a very early ANISA[2] model and stressed growth and development of the total organism: physical, emotional, and intellectual. It was by far the most comprehensive program we visited, representing the first effort in one community to develop a system capable of providing a basic education and health and social services directly to families with children up to five years of age. Unlike those in most home-based projects, the home visitors in this project were professional teachers. One was an advanced doctoral student at a nearby university. Another had recently completed her graduate work. Teachers made home visits in pairs. One teacher concentrated on the mother while the other worked with the child. In every visit, specific educational objectives were to be fulfilled by having parents and child complete daily homework assignments together. Both teachers kept detailed records on what had been done, what the perceived needs were, and what future activities should be planned.

Miscellaneous Prekindergarten Projects. We saw a few prekindergarten projects that diverged from the two predominant types described above. One is a center-based parent-child program that offers weekly classes for four-year-olds and their parents. Meetings were scheduled at times convenient for parents; for example, one class met in the evening so that fathers and working mothers could attend. The program evolved from the JDRP-validated program in St. Cloud, Minnesota, which is part of the National Diffusion Network. As with other parent-child programs, the goals are twofold: to prepare children for school entry, and to help parents become better teachers of their own children.

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[2]The root word ANISA comes from means "Tree of Life." The ANISA model represents a comprehensive theory of human development, with implications for curriculum, teaching, administration, and evaluation. For a description of the ANISA model, see Jordan, 1973.

During the first half of each class, parents and children work together. The room is arranged into six activity centers related to skill areas defined in the curriculum. A teacher and three aides facilitate the children's activities and explain their potential to parents. After a refreshment break at about midpoint, parents move to discussion groups while children remain in the classroom. If anything, the latter half of the children's sessions involved more direct instruction in reading and math readiness activities than the first.

3.3.2 First Grade Programs. Table 3.3 summarizes our data on the first grade programs we visited. We see several common features. First, all the ECT I first grade programs were child-focused and center-based. Second, most provided direct instruction daily or almost daily for somewhat less than an hour at a time. Third, Title I instruction was usually provided by a special subject or resource teacher. Fourth, in terms of goals and objectives, first grade programs are quite different from their pre-kindergarten counterparts. Both the espoused goals and actual program practice relate almost exclusively to subject matter--usually in the area of reading, but sometimes also in language arts and mathematics. A very few also have objectives in other areas, e.g., social and psychomotor development.

There are also important differences among projects. One of these is the way in which services are organized. We found two main strategies: pull-out projects, where children are taken from their regular classroom for special instruction; and projects in which children received special instruction within regular classroom activities (through the use of classroom aides, floating or traveling teachers, learning centers).

Pull-outs. Pull-out projects were more common than any other kind, a finding that is consistent with the recent NIE investigation of the effect of services on student development (Frechtling, 1977). Pull-out programs are

Table 3.3

Structural Characteristics of the First Grade Projects

SITE	PROJECT TITLE	PRIMARY RECIPIENT			LOCUS OF PROGRAM			FREQUENCY				DURATION				STAFF/CHILD RATIO				ORGANIZATION FOR INSTRUCTION								# CHILD PER CLS.	STAFF					
		Child	Parent	Child & Parent	Center	Home	Home & Center	Daily	2 to 4 Times Per Week	Weekly	< Weekly	> 3 Hours Per Session	2 to 3 Hrs. Per Session	1 Hour Per Session	< 1 Hour Per Session	1:1	1:2-1:5	1:6-1:10	> 1:10	Self-Contained Classroom	Supplementary Session	Pull-Out	Floating Teacher	Resource Room	Multi-age Grouping	Home Visits	Parent Groups		Teacher	Classroom Aide	Special Subject Teacher	Special Subject Aide	Resource Teacher	Resource Center Staff
ALABAMA																																		
Birmingham	C.I.P.	X			X			X						X				X						X				25-30				X	X	
	Traveling Teacher	X			X			X							X			X					X					8-10		X				
	Reading Program	X			X			X							X			X				X						8-10		X				
Butler County	Reading & Math	X			X														X			X						16-18		X				
Mobile	Reading & Math	X			X			X							X			X				X						16-18		X				
ARIZONA																																		
Mammoth-San Manuel (2)																																		
Phoenix	Instructional Aide K-2	X			X			X				X							X	X									25-30		X				
Scottsdale	Reading K-3	X			X			X				X							X	X									30		X				
Tucson	Comprehensive Elementary K-6	X			X			X				X							X	X									25		X				
COLORADO																																		
Commerce City	Reading Program K-6	X			X			X							X			X				X							2-6			X			
Denver (1)																																		
Poudre River I		X			X				X						X			X				X							1-5			X			
CONNECTICUT																																		
Bridgeport	Follow Through K-3	X			X			X				X							X	X									25		X				
Hartford (2)																																		
Suffield (2)																																		
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	Laboratory Program	X			X			X							X							X										X	X	
	Supplementary Prog.	X			X			X							X														X					

(1) A project is being implemented but our data is incomplete
(2) No project is being implemented at this grade level

Table 3.3 (continued)

SITE	PROJECT TITLE	PRIMARY RECIPIENT			LOCUS OF PROGRAM			FREQUENCY				DURATION				STAFF/CHILD RATIO				ORGANIZATION FOR INSTRUCTION								# CHILD PER CLS.	STAFF						
		Child	Parent	Child & Parent	Center	Home	Home & Center	Daily	2 to 4 Times Per Week	Weekly	< Weekly	> 3 Hours Per Session	2 to 3 Hrs. Per Session	1 Hour Per Session	< 1 Hour Per Session	1:1	1.2-1:5	1:6-1:10	> 1:10	Self-Contained Classroom	Supplementary Session	Pull-Out	Floating Teacher	Resource Room	Multi-age Grouping	Home Visits	Parent Groups		Teacher	Classroom Aide	Special Subject Teacher	Special Subject Aide	Resource Teacher	Resource Center Staff
IOWA																																		
Cedar Rapids	Reading Program	X			X			X							X		X					X						4			X			
Des Moines	None Specified	X			X				X						X		X					X	X					2-5			X	X	X	
Sioux City																																			
NEW JERSEY																																			
East Orange	None Specified	X			X			X							X	X	X					X						1-3			X	X		
Linden	Elementary Prog. K-6	X			X			X						X		X						X						1			X			
Teaneck (2)																																			
OHIO																																			
Columbus	Reading Program	X			X			X							X		X					X						1-6	X	X				
Dayton	Primary Reading Resource Room	X			X			X						X				X				X						7	X				X	
Zanesville	Reading Program																																		
TEXAS																																			
Dallas	Early Childhood K-3	X			X			X				X							X	X				X				25-30		X	X		X	X
Del Rio	Early Childhood Prog.	X			X			X				X						X		X					X			25-30	X		X	X			
Midland	None Specified	X			X			X				X						X		X		X						25-30			X	X		
WISCONSIN																																			
La Crosse	Reading & Math	X			X				X						X		X					X						1-6			X			
Menomonee	None Specified	X			X				X					X		X						X						1-6		X				
Racine	None Specified	X			X				X						X	X						X						2			X			

(1) A project is being implemented but our data is incomplete
(2) No project is being implemented at this grade level

remedial in intent. Children are selected by classroom teachers and Title I personnel on the basis of certain deficits and are grouped with other children who need the same level of instruction in a common area. Ideally, pull-out instruction should supplement and be consistent with the child's regular school program. In fact, coordination between classroom teachers and Title I staff is often a major challenge. This topic is discussed further in chapter 8.

The pull-out groups we observed vary in size from one to ten. Children leave their class and go to a resource room, laboratory, or other designated area. In most LEAs, special-subject teachers provide remedial instruction. In a few, pull-out teachers are former classroom teachers, some of whom have taken extra courses in reading or mathematics. There seemed to be no uniform standards to distinguish "specialists" from other teachers.

Instruction methods varied. Many teachers worked from criterion-referenced skills checklists. Some relied on their own sense of the child's progress, perhaps on the basis of informal checklists and with no apparent rational sequence of activities. Material ranged from programmed instruction kits, like DISTAR or the Peabody Language Kit, to teacher-developed language experience activities.

Pull-out programs were organized in various way. In one LEA, Title I children were a distinct subset of the first grade class. They left their classroom as a group twice a day and received reading and mathematics instruction for about forty-five minutes each in separate classrooms. Then they returned to their room to work and play with their non-Title-I peers. Title I instruction was based on skills sequences defined in basal curricula. The material differed from the reading and mathematics texts used in class.

In another site, Title I first grade children left the room singly or in pairs. Special instruction periods were short--about 20 to 30 minutes--but directly related to needs identified in regular classroom activities.

For example, most of the first grade children were working on phonetic word analysis. Title I pull-out activities centered on the letter sounds that the children found particularly difficult.

In general, pull-out programs are preferred in LEAs where compliance is an issue. Pull-outs are seen as clearly supplementary to the district's overall education program. One SEA official encouraged them because they eliminated potential compliance conflicts. "They're the best way to keep your coattails clean," he said. On the other hand, some LEA staff were less sanguine about pull-outs, for several reasons. Scheduling was often a problem, particularly when a single teacher worked in more than one school. Coordinating the times when the teacher was available with other activities, such as physical education, music class, and lunch, often made convenience rather than educational need the grouping crtierion. Some LEA personnel criticized pull-out programs because they take children away from classroom activities that they also need, such as story time or art, so that the larger education needs were sacrificed to specific skill acquisition. Another concern was expressed by a teacher in a pull-out project whose instruction material differed from classroom material. He felt that children "who need a lot of direction and consistency cannot cope with two sets of expectations. Trying to do so results in problems absorbing either." Finally, several people feared that pulling children out of regular class activities stigmatized them. Although this was probably less problematic in first grade than in later grades, they were sensitive to the potential harm.

Mainstreaming. We observed mainstream techniques including teacher aides, floating teachers, special interest areas, resource rooms, and multi-age groupings. Teacher aide programs provided the services of an aide, usually a paraprofessional,

for most of the school day. In many cases, the aide was responsible for routine and maintenance activities (e.g. correcting homework, supervising snack time, taking children to the lavatory, and the like), thus freeing the teacher for instruction and program planning. Elsewhere, the aide was also a teacher. For example, in one LEA, all aides had received intensive in-service training in the DISTAR reading program, and both teacher and aide taught reading and language, thus effectively doubling the amount of instruction each day. Because of the constant flow of activity and interaction between children, teachers, and aides, we could not assess the duration and frequency of supplementary instruction, or be sure that the services were aimed at Title I children. On the other hand, our observations strongly suggest that the presence of a teaching aide enables teachers to provide a richer and more varied program.

A second way of delivering Title I services to first grade children was to have a subject specialist come to the classroom. The special, floating, or traveling teacher worked for short periods with Title I children while the classroom teacher continued with the rest of the group. LEAs reported using this method for two very different reasons. One was to avoid the potential negative effects of labeling children (see Hobbs, 1976, for a full discussion of these issues). Another was lack of space: no rooms were available for additional laboratories or special education centers.

A third way of organizing instruction within the mainstream of classroom activities was to establish learning centers. In each classroom, material and activities were organized around a topic or problem. For example, in a science area there might be a desert terrarium. Accompanying it would be suggested activities including the use of reference material for background

information; observation; experiments; record keeping, and the like. Children worked on tasks they could do and developed additional skills with the help of the teacher and/or aide. In some classes, children had to spend a certain amount of time at each center each day; in others, the choice of activity was left to the child.

Finally, we observed two first grade projects that used special subject resource rooms. In these schools, the entire first grade regularly went to the resource room. There they worked in groups on tasks selected according to interest and instructional need and, ideally, coordinated with regular classroom activities. Resource room personnel (a teacher or aide) planned activities and made material available to children. They then worked with Title I children on their specific learning tasks.

The resource rooms and interest centers in many ways captured the optimal elements of all methods. They made available in one place skill-specific and interesting material to facilitate instruction according to individual need. Supplementary personnel were on hand to instruct children and to consult with teachers. Children worked on tasks suited to their needs and abilities without the social stigma of being removed from their classrooms. Unfortunately, scheduling conflicts and limits on space and personnel were a constraint. In the two LEAs that had them, resource rooms were available in only a few schools; and there they were an extension of an upper grade program and used by first grade classes on a space-available basis. When conflicts arose, it was clear that older children had priority.

3.3.3 Kindergarten Programs. Title I kindergartens are less homogeneous than first grade or prekindergarten projects. Their structure seems to depend on what other projects exist within the LEA. Where there are no Title I

prekindergarten projects and no state or local kindergartens, Title I kindergartens are usually independent projects. They have self-contained classrooms and are similar in many ways to ECT I prekindergartens described previously. In other cases, the Title I kindergarten is the first step in, for example, a kindergarten-to-grade-three reading program, and resembles a downward extension of first grade programs.

Organizationally, these kindergartens deliver services through pull-outs, extended day projects, or mainstream kindergartens. Table 3.4 summarizes the data on the kindergartens we visited, including both independent and multi-grade programs.

Independent Kindergarten Projects. These projects generally meet daily for three to five hours. They have their own classrooms and operate as autonomous units. As in prekindergartens, the classes are small, averaging less than twenty children. Each class has a full-time teacher and often an aide. The goals of these self-contained classes resemble those of prekindergarten programs. There is emphasis on developing social skills and preparing children to work together successfully in classrooms. However, pre-academic skills may be stressed somewhat more than in a prekindergarten project; commercial reading readiness programs are more prevalent for example. At the same time, the physical organization of the classroom often resembled that of the prekindergarten programs we had visited. The interaction between play and learning was still a central concept.

Kindergarten as Part of Early Elementary Grade Programs. These are downward extensions of later multi-grade programs, and the first step of such a sequence. Hence, their goals tend to be more similar to those of the later-grade programs than to those of prekindergarten projects. They are generally more remedial in focus than independent kindergarten programs, and their content

Table 3.4

Structural Characteristics of the Kindergarten Projects

SITE	PROJECT TITLE	PRIMARY RECIPIENT			LOCUS OF PROGRAM			FREQUENCY				DURATION				STAFF/CHILD RATIO				ORGANIZATION FOR INSTRUCTION								# CHILD PER CLS.	STAFF					
		Child	Parent	Child & Parent	Center	Home	Home & Center	Daily	2 to 4 Times Per Week	Weekly	< Weekly	> 3 Hours Per Session	2 to 3 Hrs. Per Session	1 Hour Per Session	< 1 Hour Per Session	1:1	1:2-1:5	1:6-1:10	> 1:10	Self-Contained Classroom	Supplementary Session	Pull-Out	Floating Teacher	Resource Room	Multi-age Grouping	Home Visits	Parent Groups		Teacher	Classroom Aide	Special Subject Teacher	Special Subject Aide	Resource Teacher	Resource Center Staff
ALABAMA																																		
Birmingham (3)	None Specified	X			X			X				X						X		X								20	X	X				
Butler County	None Specified	X			X			X				X						X		X								20	X	X				
Mobile	None Specified	X			X			X				X						X		X								20	X	X				
ARIZONA																																		
Mammoth-San Manuel (1)																																		
Phoenix	Extended Day	X			X			X				X						X			X							12	X	X				
	Classroom Aide	X			X			X				X							X	X						X		25		X				
Scottsdale	Instructional Aides	X			X			X				X							X									25		X				
Tucson	Comprehensive School Project K-6	X			X			X				X							X	X														
COLORADO																																		
Commerce City	None Specified	X			X			X						X			X				X									X				
Denver (2)																																		
Fourdre River I	None Specified	X			X				X						X		X				X										X			
CONNECTICUT																																		
Bridgeport	Early Childhood Program	X			X			X				X						X		X								20-25	X	X				
Hartford (2)																													X	X				
Suffield (2)																																		
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	None Specified	X			X			X							X				X	X								25-30						

(1) A project is being implemented but our data is incomplete
(2) No project is being implemented at this grade level
(3) Aides are shared among two or more classes

Table 3.4 (continued)

SITE	PROJECT TITLE	PRIMARY RECIPIENT			LOCUS OF PROGRAM			FREQUENCY				DURATION				STAFF/CHILD RATIO				ORGANIZATION FOR INSTRUCTION							# CHILD PER CLS.	STAFF					
		Child	Parent	Child & Parent	Center	Home	Home & Center	Daily	2 to 4 Times Per Week	Weekly	< Weekly	> 3 Hours Per Session	2 to 3 Hrs. Per Session	1 Hour Per Session	< 1 Hour Per Session	1:1	1:2-1:5	1:6-1:10	> 1:10	Self-Contained Classroom	Supplementary Session	Pull-Out	Floating Teacher	Resource Room	Multi-age Grouping	Home Visits	Parent Groups		Teacher	Classroom Aide	Special Subject Teacher	Special Subject Aide	Resource Teacher	Resource Center Staff
IOWA																																
Cedar Rapids	None Specified	X			X			X							X		X					X					8-12	X	X				
Des Moines (2)																																	
Sioux City	None Specified	X			X			X					X					X			X						18	X	X				
NEW JERSEY																																	
East Orange	None Specified	X			X				X						X		X					X								X			
Linden (1)	None Specified	X			X			X				X							X	X				X				14-16	X	X				
Teaneck		X			X			X					X				X					X						1-3	X	X				
OHIO																																	
Columbus	None Specified	X			X			X					X					X		X								20-25	X	X				
Dayton	None Specified	X			X			X							X			X		X		X						20-25			X			
Zanesville (2)																																	
TEXAS																																	
Dallas	Kindergarten Supplementary Reading Prog.	X			X			X				X							X	X				X				20-25					X	
Del Rio	None Specified				X			X				X							X	X								25					X	
Midland	None Specified	X			X			X				X							X	X								20-25		X			X	
WISCONSIN																																	
La Cross	None Specified	X			X			X					X						X		X							10	X					
Oconomowoc	None Specified	X			X				X						X	X						X						1		X				
Racine	None Specified	X			X				X						X	X						X						1			X			

(1) A project is being implemented but our data is incomplete
(2) No project is being implemented at this grade level

is organized around subject areas or into specific skill areas such as holding and using a pencil.

1) Pull-out projects. Only a few LEAs have Title I kindergarten pull-outs. Where they occur, there is also a pull-out program for first grade and up, and implementation practices are similar. Uusally a special-subject teacher takes a few kindergarten students aside for remedial instruction in language acquisition and use, reading readiness, or mathematics. It seemed to us that general language acquisition and use was stressed more heavily in kindergarten than in first grade. Language arts seemed more important than reading readiness at this grade level.

2) Extended day projects. Instead of removing Title I children from regular classroom activities, supplementary teaching takes place after school. For example, Title-I-eligible students attend the state or district kindergarten in the morning, remain in school for lunch, and attend a Title I session in the afternoon. The group in the supplementary session is usually smaller than the full kindergarten class and the staff:child ratio is low. In most cases teachers and aides are the same for both groups.

As with pull-out projects, the rationale for extended day projects is that greater exposure should lead to greater gains. Thus, afternoon sessions tend to resemble morning sessions but with smaller groups. In the sites we visited, basic curriculum goals were shared common to Title I and regular programs, on the theory that "these kids are behind, and if a little kindergarten is good, more is better." (ECT-1 kindergarten teacher).

3) Mainstream programs. In these programs additional personnel, usually aides, assisted classroom teachers in instructing Title I children. These extra resources were usually available for the full duration of the regular kindergarten

program. In some classes, the aides shared teaching responsibilities and actually instructed individual children or small groups. In others, they fulfilled clerical and maintenance tasks, thus freeing teachers to teach.

PART II. DESCRIPTION OF ECT I PROJECTS AND EVALUATIONS

4-1

CHAPTER 4. A DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT EVALUATION PRACTICE

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Required Evaluations

- 4.2.1 Research Design
- 4.2.2 Instruments Used for Evaluating Programs
- 4.2.3 Reporting Test Results
- 4.2.4 Program Descriptions

4.3 Optional Evaluation and Research Activities

- 4.3.1 Process Evaluations
- 4.3.2 Longitudinal Evaluation
- 4.3.3 Analysis of Program Components
- 4.3.4 Looking More Closely at the Tests
- 4.3.5 Summing Up

4.4 Resources Available for Conducting Evaluations

- 4.4.1 State Resources
- 4.4.2 Local Resources
- 4.4.3 Technical Assistance Centers (TACs)

4.5 Usefulness of Evaluation Information at the State Level

- 4.5.1 Meeting Federal Requirements
- 4.5.2 Monitoring Programs
- 4.5.3 Justifying Early Childhood Programs
- 4.5.4 Helping LEAs to Improve Program Practice

4.6 Usefulness of Evaluation Information at the Local Leval

- 4.6.1 Meeting State Requirements
- 4.6.2 Assessing Program Effectiveness
- 4.6.3 Improving Programs
- 4.6.4 Comments on the Content of Tests
- 4.6.5 Comments on the Uses of Tests

4.7 Summary

4.1 Introduction

In describing evaluation practice in ECT I programs, it is useful to distinguish the annual assessment of program effectiveness required by Title I from evaluation activities initiated by LEAs. In this chapter we first discuss the strategies LEAs use for the required annual assessment of the impact of ECT I programs on children's progress. Next we consider the varied additional evaluation activities spawned at the LEA level to meet the need for particular information about ECT I programs. These include development of program descriptions, process studies, and longitudinal studies. Interestingly, these supplementary activities are often not mentioned in the LEAs annual Title I evaluation reports. In the following section, we comment on the resources available to LEAs for evaluations--both the administrative structure for implementing evaluations and the technical qualifications of those charged with conducting them. The chapter concludes with a description, based on our field research, of the reported usefulness of evaluation information at the state and local level.

4.2 Required Evaluations

LEAs are required to conduct annual outcome evaluations on all ECT I programs. However, neither federal legislation and regulations nor SEA guidelines specify the evaluation design, the tests, or the ways results must be reported. Thus the difficult task of identifying procedures and selecting instruments for evaluating ECT I programs falls to the LEAs. In our field research we found that procedures varied from state to state and often from LEA to LEA within a given state. There were substantive differences in the technical aspects of evaluations as well as in the ability and qualifications of the staff who conducted them.

4.2.1 Research Design. The most consistent feature of the evaluation practices we observed was in the kinds of design used. Most LEAs use a

single-group pretest-posttest design. A few use a posttest-only strategy. In both cases, outcome data were obtained only for the children receiving Title I services. A few LEAs used control-group designs. One LEA used a pretest-posttest control group to assess the short-term impact of its extended-day kindergarten program project. The control group consisted of Title I eligible children in Title I eligible schools having no Title I extended-day kindergarten program. The control-group children, therefore, were enrolled only in the regular district half-day kindergarten program.

Of those LEAs using pretest-posttest designs, most administer the pretest in the fall and the posttest in the spring. For many, the pretest serves both for selection and as an evaluation data point. Some LEAs use spring screening to select eligible prekindergarten and kindergarten children for the next year. In these communities, the spring screening test results are often also used as the pretest baseline data for assessing the impact of the following year's Title I program.

In most kindergarten and prekindergarten programs we visited, the same test instruemnt is used for both pretest and posttest. In first grade, however, readiness tests are sometimes used as pretest measures and achievement tests as posttest measures.

4.2.2 Instruments Used for Evaluating Programs. There is considerable diversity in the instruments used to assess program impact. Table 4.1 lists the published tests currently employed for evaluating the ECT I programs we visited. The information is broken down by grade level and type of test. We have grouped test types as general readiness tests, individual intelligence tests, achievement batteries, language-specific achievement tests, bilingual tests, and miscellaneous tests. Unfortunately, we often found it difficult to know exactly which tests were used, only brief incomplete test titles are indicated

Table 4.1

Tests Used for Evaluation of ECT I Projects

		Pre-K	K	I
General Readiness Tests	ABC Readiness	0	1	0
	Boehm Test of Basic Concepts	7	5	1
	Caldwell Cooperative Preschool Inventory (CPI)	4	0	0
	CIRCUS	3	1	1
	Meeting Street Screening Test	1	1	0
	Metropolitan Readiness Test (MRT)	2	5	3
	Santa Clara Inventory of Developmental Tasks	2	1	1
	Screening Test of Academic Readiness (STAR)	0	1	0
	Test of Basic Experiences (TOBE)	3	4	1
	Walker Readiness Test	1	0	0
Individual Intelligence Tests	Columbia Mental Maturity Scale	1	0	0
	Denver Developmental Screening Test	1	0	0
	Goodenough Draw-A-Man	1	0	0
	McCarthy Scales of Children's Abilities	1	0	0
	Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test	2	3	1
	Slosson Intelligence Test	1	0	0
Achievement Batteries	California Achievement Test (CAT)	0	0	6
	Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS)	0	3	5
	Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)	0	0	1
	Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT)	0	0	4
	Peabody Individual Achievement Test	0	0	1
	Stanford Early School Achievement Test (SESAT)	0	2	5
	Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT)	0	0	1
Reading or Language Specific Achievement Tests	Carrow Screening Test for Auditory Comprehension of Language	2	0	0
	Dolch Basic Sight Words	0	0	1
	Gates MacGinitie Reading Test	0	0	1
	Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities	1	0	0
Bilingual	Bilingual Syntax Measure	1	1	1
Perceptual Motor	Beery Buktenica Test of Visual Motor Integration	3	1	0
Socio-emotional	Gumpgookies	1	0	0
	Number of tests used	19	13	16

in the application and evaluation information from the sites and in our field notes. In summarizing test use we occasionally had to guess; therefore, we caution the reader against assigning too much importance to the frequencies given. We reiterate our early caveat that these data are best viewed as suggestive of the range of measures currently used; they should not be interpreted as indicators of the frequency of use. Moreover, many LEAs use more than one instrument to evaluate their programs. Therefore, the frequency counts on the various instruments total more than the number of sites visited.

Examination of these data suggests some interesting points. First, a wide range of tests is used for ECT I program evaluation. This is consistent with the finding reported in the literature review for FY 1976 State Title I Evaluation Reports (Haney, 1978).

Second, looking at the tests by substantive area, we find that nine tests may be classified as general readiness tests, five as individual intelligence tests, eight as language-specific achievement tests, two as bilingual language achievement tests, and one as a test of visual motor integration. If we group the general achievement batteries with language-specific achievement tests, we find that sixteen different achievement tests are being used to evaluate the ECT I programs in our sample. In addition (not shown in the table), seventeen of the twenty-nine LEAs we visited have developed their own criterion-referenced tests in language and/or reading and use these for both program evaluation and student diagnosis.

Third, there is only one standardized test used to measure socio-emotional development, and only one that assesses psychomotor skills. Similarly, we found only limited LEA efforts at developing criterion-referenced checklists in these domains. Two projects had created checklists of social development, one a

test of motor skills. This basically confirms the findings of the literature review (Haney, 1978) on the paucity of adequate measures in these areas. The paradox is that, although many projects include goals in these areas as essential components, they do not formally evaluate them. Our interviews with program personnel at all levels indicate that there is widespread concern about the dearth of adequate material in these areas. Haney, summarizing the work of Buros (1972), Hoepfner et al. (1976), Johnson and Bommarito (1971), Johnson (1976), and Walker (1973), suggests that in recent years more work has been done to develop tests for young children in the areas of sensory perception, cognitive style, cognitive processes, and socio-emotional development; but we found little evidence that LEAs are using these new tests. It is not clear whether they are unknown to people in the field or whether they have been considered and rejected for technical, logistic, or substantive reasons.

Fourth, if we look at the tests in Table 4.1 by category and by grade level, we find that in first grade, achievement tests are most often used. The most prevalent tests at this grade level are part of a nationally normed test series: the Metropolitan Achievement Tests, the California Achievement Test, the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills, and the Stanford Early School Achievement. These are all group-administered; in fact, at first grade we find few individually administered tests. At the prekindergarten level, on the other hand, the most often used tests are individually administered general readiness tests and intelligence tests. Various language-specific achievement tests are also used, but no single one predominates. As for kindergarten programs, they draw tests from all categories. Those that are the first level of multi-grade sequences with a subject-specific emphasis (e.g., a kindergarten-through-grade-six pull-out reading program) most frequently evaluate program effectiveness with achievement tests. Those with more broadly defined program objectives, for example task orientation and behavioral organization, tend to

evaluate their programs with general readiness or individual intelligence tests.

4.2.3 Reporting Test Results. Several SEAs have required formats for reporting test results; others are more laissez faire. In the latter there seems to be a wide variety of reporting methods. For example, in one state, a small LEA reported prekindergarten test scores in terms of mean gains in raw scores. Larger LEAs in the same state reported results for similar projects in terms of NCE gains. We found instances of the following reporting procedures for pretest-posttest designs using norm-referenced tests: mean gains scores, mean percentile rank improvement, average percentage of maximum possible gains,[1] and NCE gains. For non-norm-referenced tests, results were usually reported in terms of mean gains in raw scores. Similarly, for posttest-only designs, projects reported outcomes in terms of mean posttest scores in age or grade equivalents, or percentage of pupils attaining some percentile, stanine, or grade equivalent criteria (for norm-referenced tests); or in the raw metric (for non-norm-referenced tests).

SEA representatives in several states said that they were looking for ways to bring evaluation and reporting procedures for ECT I programs into conformity with those in later grades. In other states, this didn't seem to be an issue. In general, even among state personnel we could discern no unanimity on desired formats for reporting results of early childhood evaluations.

4.2.4 Program Descriptions. In addition to outcome evaluations, most states also require LEAs to present descriptive summaries of their programs. Although there seems to be a trend toward developing standard reporting forms,

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[1] In this case, for any individual, the maximum possible gain is defined as: maximum possible gain = maximum possible posttest score minus actual pretest score. A maximum possible gain score can be calculated for each individual and then averaged to yield an average maximum possible gain. Actual gains (actual posttest minus actual pretest) can then be expressed as a percentage of average maximum possible gain. This method was used in only one LEA which we visited.

requirements still vary across states. Some seek information on the demographic characteristics and resources of the community; others ask for a description of administrative procedures in implementing programs; and a few require both. More specific information--on topics such as criteria for determining school eligibility, number of eligible schools receiving services, needs assessment procedures, screening procedures for assuring parent participation, and inservice staff training provisions--is also sometimes required. Rarely, however, are actual program characteristics described. Location of instruction, staff:child ratio, instructional strategy, curriculum and pedagogical theory are largely unspecified. Moreover, prekindergarten, kindergarten, and first-grade programs are sometimes reported separately, sometimes together, and sometimes in various combinations with other programs.

4.3 Optional Evaluation and Research Activities

In addition to the required evaluations annually reported to SEAs, we found that a number of local education agencies conducted additional evaluations, initiated for local purposes and seldom reported to SEAs. Optional evaluations are generally conducted either in LEAs with a large and relatively sophisticated evaluation staff or where a nearby university provides supplementary resources.

The aim of these activities was to shed light on what was happening in local programs (process evaluations), on what happened to children as a result of program participation (longitudinal evaluations and case studies), or on the efficacy of alternative program practices (comparative analysis of various screening procedures or program components). Optional evaluations address general questions such as "What are programs really doing?" and "How can they do it better?"

4.3.1 Process Evaluations. Some of the LEAs we visited are conducting or have recently conducted process studies. However, process evaluation means different things to different evaluators. To give an idea of the variety of purposes, the differences in scope and intensity, and the many ways of using information from these studies, a brief description of some of the process evaluations we observed may be useful. In one large LEA, trained evaluators monitor the activities of each prekindergarten class for one week twice a year. Using an extensive observation guide and interview questionnaire, they track the activities of two children each day and follow up with interviews with teachers and parents. The in-depth multi-perspective profiles that result are summarized and used primarily for in-service staff training. They are viewed as major mechanisms for program improvement. At this site, the teachers, evaluators, and administrators we interviewed all expressed a great sense of involvement in this form of evaluation.

In another large site, process evaluation is conducted in a broader but less detailed fashion. Two full-time evaluators do nothing but process studies. The purpose here seems to be to standardize program delivery in the many schools served by the LEA. Each year the evaluators select a random sample of Title I schools for study. Within these schools, all early childhood projects (kindergarten, in this case) are visited in early winter and late spring. Approximately seventy to eighty classes are observed each year. Each evaluator visits and reports on from thirty-five to forty classrooms! The evaluation procedure combines classroom observations with teacher interviews. The winter observation session is about an hour long, and is followed by a five to fifteen-minute interview with the teacher. In the spring, the observation time is shorter and the interview longer. We could obtain no copies of observation or interview

protocols, but LEA evaluation staff reported that they focus on what is happening in the classroom, children's responses to instructional material, and teachers' classroom management. As in the previous example, the information gleaned is not reported to the SEA, but is used by the LEA for curriculum development and staff supervisory functions.

Several LEAs described process evaluations conducted by parents, all using the same basic procedures--observations, interviews, and occasionally questionnaires. District Parent Advisory Councils usually sponsor these activities. Results are reported first to the PAC, which in turn makes recommendations for future program practice. PAC reports are submitted to the district superintendent and used in the needs assessment that is submitted in the funding request for the next fiscal year.

4.3.2 Longitudinal Evaluation. Although many of those we interviewed described the fundamental purpose of ECT I programs as preventing later educational deficits, we found little concrete evidence on the long-term effects of ECT I programs. Many people associated with Title I acknowledged a need to document long-term program impact, and spoke somewhat wistfully of longitudinal studies that would follow a group of children from ECT I programs through elementary school. In addition to providing a more valid assessment of the true effectiveness of ECT I, longitudinal evaluations were seen as being useful for justifying the continuation of projects and for improving practice.

We found only a few local education agencies that are attempting or have attempted longitudinal evaluations. In a small LEA that allocated almost all of its Title I funds to a prekindergarten project, a primary program objective was "to increase intelligence as measured by an intelligence test." During the program year, children were given the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test both as pretest in the fall and as posttest in the spring. Mean gains scores were

reported as "substantial," although apparently no statistical analysis was done. After four years of program operation, all previous participants were again tested. Modest declines from the posttest were indicated (again without statistical analysis), although the average IQ for all groups tested remained some twelve points higher than at pretest. Moreover, the length of time students had been out of the prekindergarten program (evaluations had been conducted for four cohorts ranging from one to four years out) apparently had no effect on the decrease in IQ.

A second question examined in this evaluation was the value of two years of participation in the ECT I preschool as compared with only one. Essentially, the same procedure was used, but with a very small group of six to eight children who had spent two years in the program. On the basis of this evaluation, it was concluded that there was little value in continuing the program in its present two-year form, and changes were made accordingly.

Interestingly, this LEA--a rural community in a largely agricultural area with low family mobility--reported no sample attrition over five years. This is unusual, for in most of the LEAs we visited, high family mobility is an issue of much concern. Clearly, in such districts it would be much more difficult to make a valid longitudinal study.

Another longitudinal evaluation was conducted in a much larger LEA in another state. This district has collected and stored information on individual students since 1973, and uses it to see whether individual children eventually "test out" of Title I, when, and whether they later test back in. The concern in this community, and in several others, is that after the ECT I kindergarten program, children often tested too high to be eligible for a Title I first-grade program, but that by second or third grade they might fall behind and would again need remedial assistance. While results of this evaluation were not yet available, there was already much discussion--though not necessarily agreement--

on what ought to be done if "regression" occurs in significant numbers. Some of the administrative staff felt that the ECT I project ought to be discontinued, on the grounds that it has no long-term effects. Others felt that it should be maintained, but that special services should be provided at first grade to prevent regression. A third group argued that selection criteria at first grade should be changed so that children could continue to receive services even if their test scores were higher than the cut-off. (i.e., bottom thirty-third percentile) mandated by the state.

Debates similar to the one described above are occurring in many LEAs and SEAs we visited. There often seem to be two firmly entrenched positions, one arguing for continuation of early childhood programs even in the absence of empirical evidence justifying them, and the other holding that they should be eliminated unless their efficacy can be firmly established by a valid evaluation. Some of the latter group would eliminate ECT I programs so as to free resources for what they regard as more pressing concerns, such as minimum-competency remedial programs in secondary school. While longitudinal evaluations hold great promise of generating information relevant to these discussions, logistic difficulties often preclude realization of their potential. These problems are discussed in some detail in chapter 12 of Bryk et al., (1978). We summarize here only the difficulties as they are preceived by SEA and LEA officials.

Most were concerned with the feasibility of conducting longitudinal evaluations. Population mobility and hence attrition were often cited as deterrents. Program staff lamented the loss of children within a single year, not to mention long-term attrition. They maintained that even short-term pretest-posttest evaluations were difficult to conduct because so many children moved from school to school. They were far from optimistic about retaining enough students over

several years to analyze long-term effects. In fact, at one LEA, a prekindergarten teacher was attempting to locate ECT I students from previous years. She had great difficulty, and actually found very few.

Cost and lack of adequate personnel resources were also mentioned as reasons for not starting, or in some cases for dropping, longitudinal evaluations. People feared that the costs of tracing graduates of ECT I projects, testing, analyzing data, and simply coordinating such a study would substantially cut down the number of children that ECT I projects could serve or would impair the quality of services.

4.3.3 Analysis of Program Components. Identifying optimal service delivery strategies was mentioned in several places that we visited. People at all levels of service and administration were concerned that they make the best use of the resources available. As a result, program personnel have changed the program structure--for example, by adding parent education components, moving from church and community sites to the public schools, increasing or decreasing the number of years children receive prekindergarten services, changing the grade levels at which services are available, and the like. In most cases, these decisions were based either on expediency (e.g., availability of space) or on informal judgments of program efficacy. In a few instances, however, LEAs have begun formal efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of alternative program practices.

For example, one LEA compared the short-term effects of a center-based prekindergarten program with those of a home-visit parent-child program. In addition, the evaluators included in their design a control group of Title I eligible children for whom no preschool program was available. Using a pretest-posttest strategy, they compared gains scores across groups on four separate tests. The results indicated that both preschool programs produced gains on at least two of the four tests. The center-based treatment group, however,

showed significantly greater gains than did the home-visit program. As a result of the evaluation, the community dropped the home-visit program but continued the center-based prekindergarten.

The question of choosing between a home-based and a center-based prekindergarten program had arisen in another LEA that we visited. Here, a process study of the home-visit program was conducted, which led to a similar conclusion. Further comments on this study are presented in section 4.6.3 of this report.

Another large LEA is conducting a complex study of the relative efficacy of various service components of Title I. The LEA staff identified a set of core services judged essential to the ECT I programs. These include reading and mathematics aides, material for resource laboratories, parent volunteers in the classroom, program assistants, in-service staff training, and eyeglasses and clothing for children who need them. These services are provided in all ECT I programs included in the study. Additional services are of four types: 1) more extensive pupil personnel services; 2) additional kindergarten aides; 3) a combination of parent aides and cultural enrichment activities; and 4) more emphasis on staff in-service sessions and teacher support. Each Title I school has been randomly assigned to a combination of three of the four options. Each school will retain its current service package for the next three years. The evaluation of these alternative packages will be completed sometime after 1980.

4.3.4 Looking More Closely at the Tests. Other LEAs are investigating various aspects of the tests they are using. For example, the evaluation department of one highly sophisticated LEA is making a comparative analysis of the language and mathematics subtests of the Test of Basic Experiences (TOBE). Using the pretest scores of children in one year, evaluators examine how many children would be eligible (having scores below the thirty-third percentile) if the total test scores were used, or if just one of the subtests were used,

as a selection criterion. Their initial analysis suggests that the language subtest used alone yields a higher number of Title I eligible prekindergarten students than the mathematics subtest or the combined score. How the LEA intends to use this information is unclear.

Several other LEAs are doing some sort of item analysis of the tests they are currently using. A single test taken alone often appears inadequate for selection or evaluation purposes. Many practitioners feel, however, that individual items or subtests, when combined with items from other tests, may prove more useful. Ultimately these item analyses are likely to lead to LEA-specific tests that are unique combinations of items from various standardized tests.

4.3.5 Summing Up. Looking across the optional evaluation and research efforts described above, we are struck by several things. First, while we have identified diverse efforts, they are few in number. In the twenty-nine LEAs visited, we found only a small number of process studies, longitudinal studies, and component and test analyses, most of them concentrated in a few large LEAs. Our interview information suggests several reasons for this. First, resources available for locally initiated evaluations are scarce. In most local education agencies all available evaluation personnel are needed for the required evaluations. Second, except in very large and well-funded LEAs, evaluation staff are not trained in sophisticated evaluations. Furthermore, no additional resources from the state education agencies are generally available. The Technical Assistance Centers are potential resources, but to date they have concentrated on helping to implement the USED models in grades two to twelve. Finally, many program personnel are simply not attuned to evaluation, perceiving them as vague and somewhat threatening undertakings

that they seek to avoid if at all possible. Since in most LEAs communication between program and evaluation personnel is minimal, little is done to overcome these initial fears. At the middle and upper administrative levels, we more often encountered personnel who saw a need for and could anticipate the usefulness of additional evaluations. In most cases, however, either logistic or technical obstacles precluded efforts to produce information they thought potentially useful.

4.4 Resources Available for Conducting Evaluations

4.4.1 State Resources. In general, it appears that most states have insufficient resources to provide widespread technical assistance to LEAs in evaluating their programs. This is particularly true at the early childhood level. While most states we visited had early childhood program specialists,[2] few had evaluation staffs with experience in this area. In many, the evaluation personnel were concerned about the adequacy of standard designs and assessment indices, but few had the expertise to develop alternatives.

4.4.2 Local Resources. At the local level, the availability of evaluation resources varied rather more. We visited communities in which Title I evaluation was just one of many tasks of a single person. In some, one person was responsible for Title I evaluation as well for program planning and administration. In others, one person was responsible for evaluating several federal or state-funded programs. In sharp contrast, several LEAs have large and sophisticated evaluation departments where responsibility is shared among many highly trained staff members. Evaluation resources are, of course, related to the size of LEAs, with larger districts generally more likely to have a large evaluation staff than small ones. However, bigger did not necessarily mean better. We visited

[2] This may not be true in all states. The reader will recall that in this study we purposely selected states in which early childhood education had some priority in Title I program practice. It is reasonable to expect that states placing lower priority on ECT I would have fewer specially trained staff.

several large cities in which evaluation was limited in scope and occurred in a rather pro forma fashion.

Another important aspect of local evaluation practice is the amount and quality of communication between evaluation and program personnel. In one LEA, for example, the director of early childhood programs said that although all tests had been given on schedule, no results were reported to her. Only after several visits to the evaluation department (located in a downtown administration building far removed from all program activity) was she able to obtain a copy of the evaluation report. In the same community, teachers reported that they had never seen Title I evaluation reports or learned of findings from them.

On the other hand, in a community of similar size, evaluation and program personnel spoke with us together, and it was clear that each understood the goals of the other and tried to coordinate activities. Not surprisingly, evaluation activity here went beyond the required outcome procedures and explored questions of interest to both evaluators and program personnel. In another community, the evaluation coordinator described as one of the more rewarding aspects of her task being able to suggest program alternatives based on the data. "They don't always take my suggestions," she said, "but now and again they do and the program changes."

We mention these differences in evaluation resources not as criticism, but to underscore the difficulty of developing evaluation procedures that can be useful and usable across all LEAs. One SEA Title I director summed it up well. He said, "There are some LEAs for which only the simplest procedures are appropriate. It doesn't mean they are not good programs. They may be fantastic. They just are not set up to handle complicated evaluations. Other places can do anything. They are interested in and ready for new ideas."

4.4.3 Technical Assistance Centers (TACs). The potential of the Technical Assistance Centers as an important resource in evaluating ECT I programs has yet

to be fully tapped. So far they have focused on implementing the RMC models for evaluating programs in grades two through twelve. While TACs are not specifically charged with providing assistance in ECT I, TAC staff in several regions are doing so, nevertheless, in response to direct requests from SEA and LEA staff.

The availability of these resources to LEAs is limited by several factors. First, since TACs have no brief to assist in ECT I evaluation, their resources may be inadequate--in terms of both technical expertise and of supporting material (e.g., information on early childhood tests). Second, under the procedures operating in some states, LEAs can gain access to TAC services only by requesting it through the SEA office. If, for whatever reason, the SEA chooses to ignore or refuse these requests, the LEA cannot draw on the resources of the TAC.

4.5 Usefulness of Evaluation Information at the State Level

Our field visits reveal that SEA Title I officials make very limited use of the information gleaned from required evaluations. Further, there are differences of opinion about the general utility of the information generated. We discuss the various uses of evaluation information below. Additional discussion of the utility of the data can be found in chapter 7 of Bryk, et al. (1978).

4.5.1 Meeting Federal Requirements. At the SEA level, evaluation results are used mainly to prepare the annual state reports for the Office of Education. The law does not specify the content or form of these reports, and their quality varies widely from state to state (Haney, 1978). Most states give detailed summaries of enrollment, as well as data on LEA characteristics, selection criteria, needs assessment, and parent involvement. However, few summarize program characteristics, such as location of instruction or program emphasis. Most SEAs now report to the Education Department some outcome measures for the first grade. Fewer report impact data for kindergarten, and fewer still for prekindergarten and kindergarten programs (Haney, 1978). The problem seems to lie in the difficulty of aggregating impact

data for early childhood programs. This seems to result from: 1) the difficulty in defining and then measuring impact in the early years, and 2) the variety of tests and observation instruments used by LEAs.

Another problem from the SEA perspective is in the quality of information transmitted to and from their LEAs. Although one state official reported that he was basically satisfied with the LEA reporting procedures in his state, officials in at least four others said that more descriptive information about early childhood programs would be helpful. They wanted to know more about such characteristics as the number of pupils enrolled, the length and kind of programs, annual expenditures per pupil, materials, teacher training, teacher time spent on different tasks, and selection procedures. The staff of one SEA considered the diversity of program types and the way they are described to be particularly problematic. They suggested a more uniform reporting system, including clear definitions of terms such as "cognition" and "fine motor" skills. In general, people seemed to know surprisingly little about how information was reproted in states other than their own. They were not aware that some states are provided with the kind of information they seek. There seems to be little organized communication from SEA to SEA, at least about procedural matters such as report forms.

4.5.2. Monitoring Programs. One of the most time-consuming tasks for SEA staff is periodic monitoring of local programs. Monitoring fulfills several functions. First, it is the principal means by which SEAs insure compliance with federal regulations. Second, it allows SEA staff to maintain contact with LEA personnel and offer informal technical and program advice. Finally, it is often the main way in which SEA officials learn what is going on in their states and judge program quality and effectiveness. Typically, SEAs distribute monitoring assignments among several staff members. In some states one member of the

SEA staff may be trained in a special discipline such as early childhood education, reading, or evaluation. However, it is customary for each state representative to visit programs at all levels and to assess both evaluation and program activities at all grade levels.

In some states, monitoring is used in conjunction with evaluation to determine where to place emphasis. In one state, for example, when test scores are found to be low for a particular project, indicating that it may not be optimally effective, SEA staff will monitor that project carefully so as to determine the reason. In one LEA, the Title I administrative staff were found to be spending too little time in a center reporting very low test scores. Before allocating funds for the next fiscal year, the SEA strongly suggested modifications in the local staffing pattern.

Some tension between state and local personnel seem to be implicit in the monitoring process, since it is often regarded as a compliance check. This can inhibit the effective use of evaluation data to improve program practice.

4.5.3 Justifying Early Childhood Programs. Evaluation data are also used by state officials to defend--or to urge elimination of--early childhood programs. State personnel have a legitimate interest in assessing the effectiveness of local programs, both to meet federal reporting requirements and to determine whether their expenditure of money and effort is producing results. However, there is much disagreement about how best to assess the effect of early childhood programs, what to evaluate, and whether to emphasize long-term or short-term impact.

4.5.4 Helping LEAs to Improve Program Practice. SEAs we visited are concerned with helping LEAs to improve their programs in several ways. Some try to do so through monitoring or informal discussions with LEA staff. They may convey information about other successful programs and put people with

common interests in touch with one another. Evaluation reports are important in establishing which programs are successful.

4.6 Usefulness of Evaluation Information at the Local Level

ECT I evaluation information was used and valued differently in various LEAs. One Title I director summed up his position succinctly: "If we weren't required to do evaluation, we wouldn't be bothered." Another termed evaluation of programs for very young children "ridiculous." That evaluations could produce useful local information and help in decision making apparently had not occurred to some of those with whom we spoke. Others seemed to be afraid of the whole process. Others still showed only a glimmer of understanding of the potential uses of evaluation. They saw it as something mysterious and highly technical that they would not presume to influence. This attitude prevailed in several sites where interesting evaluations seemed possible but where activities were limited to fulfilling requirements.

On the other hand, representatives of several LEAs were at least satisfied with, if not generally enthusiastic, about their evaluations and the information they generated. One site visitor remarked, "I have the impression that a lot of people in these United States have learned a whole new field that they are excited about and proud to be part of. It is called evaluation. Their positiveness toward the evaluations they have created for their programs may in part reflect the euphoria of being involved in something important."

We found that in most places views fell somewhere between these two extremes. Local staff were aware that evaluation information was potentially useful. Many needed technical assistance but were willing to try. On the issue of evaluation of early childhood programs per se, they were less sanguine. They saw difficulties in accurately and adequately assessing the effects of intervention programs on very young children. Let us consider first the ways in which LEA staff found

evaluation information to be useful or limited for these programs. We refer the reader interested in further discussion to chapter 8 in Bryk, et al. (1978).

4.6.1 Meeting State Requirements. The most obvious and prevalent use of local evaluation data was to meet state reporting requirements. This was not always done with enthusiasm but it was acknowledged as an inevitable part of Title-I-funded activities. While the evaluation reports produced in this spirit seemed to be of little local value, some components were used. For example, many LEAs used pretest data in diagnosing children's needs and planning programs to meet them. We will discuss these uses further in subsequent sections of this report.

4.6.2 Assessing Program Effectiveness. This function was stressed by a number of evaluators and Title I directors. A common LEA practice is to present the evaluation report to the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education, and the Parent Advisory Council, as testimony to the program's success in meeting its stated objectives.

Timing of the evaluation is a critical issue in some LEAs. The report is often completed too late in the academic year to be of much help in planning the next year's program (e.g., for needs assessment). On the other hand, it seems inevitable that the report influences general thinking about needs and long-term planning for the district. Such uses, however, are virtually impossible to assess on the basis of single short visits to an LEA. They only occur over time and often in such a diffuse fashion that their significance can only be established by observation over the long term.

4.6.3 Improving Programs. Our site visits indicated that evaluation information is used in complex and subtle ways to improve program practice. There are many ways in which changes can be made. Entire programs may be initiated or

ended. Some may be extended to a grade level or age group not previously served while others are curtailed. Finally and most commonly, curriculum emphasis and objectives may be shifted, teachers' instructional methods altered, and new material introduced. How these decisions are made varies from LEA to LEA. In small districts, or in those where the early childhood program project is quite separate from the rest of the district's program, its director may have almost exclusive power to make program decisions. In larger districts, a group of administrators and teachers, the school board, and PACs may all exert influence.

In general, it seems that major program changes are seldom due exclusively to evaluation results. Administrators in four LEAs reported that most programs in their districts are changed on political, economic, or bureaucratic grounds, and officials in six others stated that they drew little on formal evaluation results for program decisions. However, this is not true of all LEAs. Officials of one urban LEA, for example, described how a prekindergarten program was changed from home-based to a center-based one. Two factors influenced the decision. First, the cost of omitting the home-based program was high.[4] Second, process monitoring by the evaluation staff suggested that parents were not being trained as planned. In considering alternatives, members of the Title I staff visited a validated center-based program that emphasized similar parent educational goals. They proposed such a program modification to the PAC, which in turn surveyed parent attitudes toward the two kinds of programs. A pilot project was initiated in one classroom the next year. After it was evaluated, the PAC recommended that

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[4]Comparative costs in this case differed from those of another LEA faced with the same decision. In the latter case, cost of the center-based program, a five-day-a-week comprehensive program, was higher than a comparable twice-weekly home visit program.

the total program be modified accordingly. The board considered the results of monitoring, the parent survey, and the pilot test and followed the recommendation.

Although examples of such extensive cooperation among program administrators, staff, evaluators, and parents are perhaps rare, evaluator's specific and well-founded recommendations for program change are often heeded. For example, the ECT I director in a large LEA reported that in reviewing the annual evaluation he pays particular attention to recommended program changes. He tries to make at least some of them each year. Among the program innovations derived from evaluation results in that community were a pilot mathematics component in the kindergarten, introduction of a prekindergarten program, extension of kindergarten classes from half a day to a full day, and a shift in prekindergarten emphasis from socio-emotional development to a more cognitive and skills-oriented program.

At a different level, we have ample evidence that LEA staff use evaluation data to make grade-specific, school-specific, or class-specific changes in curriculum and teaching strategy. Sometimes program staff use pretest results to change the plan for the coming year. At other times they use posttest results to plan summer training or long-range program activities for the next year. It is worth noting that extensive use of evaluation information seemed to occur most often in LEAs that reported close coordination between program personnel and evaluation staff.

The most frequent contributors to changing classroom practice are not the required evaluations but optional activities. Both examples of program changes described in this subsection were influenced by supplementary local evaluations. Similarly, in several LEAs CRT results have been analyzed to determine deficits

in skills acquisition. These analyses proceed at two levels: class (all of these children are having trouble with vowel sounds) and individual (Johnny needs help with "long a").

A few LEAs have developed systematic process monitoring, including classroom observations. These have proven very useful in improving local program practice. Interestingly, the staff in several LEAs where such information is not available expressed a desire for more systematic knowledge of classroom activities. In these sites, cost was cited as the reason for not conducting additional process evaluations.

Finally, both required and optional evaluation results are used in the supervision, training, or termination of staff. Many directors reported extending or reallocating their supervisory team to get resources to grade levels, schools, and/or teachers whose evaluation results indicated that they needed help.

4.6.4 Comments on the Content of Tests. Early childhood tests and measures were of concern in virtually every LEA we visited. This is the strongest and most consistent finding from our data. Many sites have tried various tests and test combinations but still are not fully satisfied with what they are using. However, although there is unanimity that there are problems with existing tests, perceptions of the nature of the problems differ. Some people focus on the substance of what the tests measure; others, on the uses to which the tests are put.

In terms of content, we found that many wanted tests that more accurately assess the major goals of early childhood education in general and their own version of them in particular. Most stressed that the educational needs of young children and the goals of ECT I programs are far more diverse than strictly academic or pre-academic skills. Therefore, the broader non-academic areas needed to be considered in early childhood testing and assessment. Although different

labels were used to identify special goal areas, they seem to fall into three broad groups: social and emotional development; psychomotor development; and general language development.

Measuring Social and Emotional Growth. Concern about tests in this realm apparently stems less from theoretical positions than from strong clinical beliefs that young children often need help in these areas if they are to succeed in school. For example, one Title I director said that two kinds of children are not ready to move from kindergarten to first grade, "those who are not socially ready and those who are not psychologically ready." However, psychological readiness can only be judged clinically at this point and often is based on the informal observations of teachers and/or parents. "If programs are going to try to improve in those areas," this person argued, "and if Title I programs are to evaluate what they are doing with children, better assessment indices are essential."

Measuring Psychomotor Development. The second area in which better tests were desired was psychomotor development. Some programs use screening tests or multipurpose intelligence tests with subtests in this area to assess progress (e.g., the McCarthy Scales of Children's Abilities). Other LEAs find these tests too expensive to administer and lack personnel with the necessary training. Moreover, we suspect that in many sites the existence of these tests is simply unknown.

Measuring Language Development. Third, many people expressed the need for better ways to assess children's language. They felt that one of the characteristics of Title I children in the early school years is a delay in language development. This includes deficits in both knowledge (i.e., a limited vocabulary and immature syntactic structures) and ability to use language; children

were described as unwilling or unable to use language to express their ideas and needs. There was consensus that most Title I children need help with both, and improving language skills is a primary goal in virtually every program we visited. It should be possible to use existing tests to measure the approximate number of new words a child has learned. However, teachers felt that there is no way to assess the amount of language a child uses or the purposes for which he uses it. Many of them believed that children improved in this area as a result of participating in the ECT I program, but that the improvement simply cannot be measured.

4.6.5 Comments on the Uses of Tests. We can broadly categorize the uses of tests as follows: selecting children for ECT I programs, diagnosing or identifying individual children's needs, and evaluating program effectiveness. The selection issue is discussed at length in chapter 6. We describe here comments from the field on the uses of tests for diagnosis and evaluation.

Diagnosing Individual Needs. For teachers, the most significant use of tests is in diagnosing individual needs and developing instructional plans to meet them. Most teachers are less concerned with mean scores or a comparison of their students with others than with developing an accurate picture of what each child can do and what instructional services each child needs to improve. While tests, in particular pretests, were usually only part of the diagnostic process, in many sites they played a central role. However, most standardized tests used for evaluation serve a normative function, i.e., locating the level of a child's development vis-a-vis his age or grade peers. These tests often lack sufficient items by subskill area for accurate assessment of a child's skill development. For example, one test often used in kindergarten attempts to assess comprehension of "basic concepts necessary for understanding and following

directions." It taps concepts such as "top," "through," "away from," "next," "enter," "beginning," and "other" (Boehm, 1971). However, there is only one test item for each concept. A child who fails to understand the example (or becomes confused by the pencil-and-paper list) is judged to lack understanding of the concept. In addition, these tests provide little information on the child's learning style, which is critical if the teacher is to select the appropriate instruction material and teaching methods to meet the child's needs.

In response to these problems, several LEAs have developed criterion-referenced tests related to their own objectives and yielding individual child profiles in relevant skill and concept areas. We have not analyzed the substantive or technical adequacy of these tests. The problems in test development in this area are discussed in more detail in chapter 18 of Bryk, et al. (1978).

Evaluating Program Effectiveness. Finally, many people were concerned that standardized tests do not tap the broad range of attitudes, concepts, and skills that constitute the goals and objectives of their programs. For example, one informant said that the tests now used represent "only a small part of what we are doing." He wanted tests tailored to program objectives. Another lamented that there is no single set of skills and behaviors that all early childhood educators could agree upon to define school readiness. Therefore, each test has its own definition of readiness. Unfortunately, these definitions were only approximations of readiness as interpreted by his ECT I program.

Still others felt that the discrepancy between evaluation and curriculum was most acute in classes using individual instruction. In the most extreme form of individual projects, each child pursued a unique set of objectives; the total constellation of objectives pursued by all children could not be captured by a single test or even a small set of tests. Although we saw few

programs in which this model of individualization was used, most of the sites we visited keep individual profiles and plans for children, and yet use the same tests for all children. Here, too, some criterion-referenced tests are being developed in response to the perceived inadequacies of existing tests.

4.7 Summary

In summary, we found that all ECT I programs are engaged in some activity to fulfill the evaluation requirements of Title I. In many localities the sole function of evaluation is to fulfill those requirements; it seemed to serve no useful local purpose. A few LEAs have begun evaluation activities beyond the required minimum. Their staff report that the results of these efforts are playing an important role in planning and program improvement.

In general there is dissatisfaction with existing tests in the early childhood domain, in terms of both test content and the way test information is used. Concern about tests was felt in virtually every SEA and LEA we visited.

PART III. ANALYSIS OF ECT I PRACTICE

CHAPTER 5. ECT I PROGRAMS COMPARED WITH TRENDS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 An Increase in Early Childhood Education Programs

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5.3 Summary

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the state of the art in early childhood education generally and to locate early childhood Title I programs within that context. Haney (1978) identified seven major trends in early childhood education. We will summarize these briefly here, and then look at the distinguishing characteristics of ECT I programs within the field of early childhood education. In subsequent chapters we will examine each trend in detail from the perspective of ECT I programs as we observed them.

5.1.1 An Increase in Early Childhood Education Programs. Early childhood education in the United States has a long history. The lastest upsurge of interest dates back to the 1960s when research findings and government support provided a new impetus. The evidence used to support intervention programs was work documenting the beneficial effects of early stimulation on human beings (Bronfenbrenner, 1974) and indicating that the behavior of infants and young children is relatively malleable. This idea, sometimes encompassed in the term "plasticity of early development," led to the inference that the early childhood years are critical for successful intervention.

The work of three developmental psychologists--Piaget, Hunt, and Bloom--was especially influential in promoting these ideas. Piaget developed a complex theory of cognitive stages. It is impossible to summarize it fully in this report; the interested reader is referred to Hunt (1961) or Flavell (1963) for excellent sytheses. However, in brief, Piaget argues that children pass through four major cognitive stages during their first twelve to fourteen years. The quality of cognitive functioning at each stage differs. Children pass through the various stages in roughly the same sequence but at very

different rates, determined by the kinds of interaction the child has with the physical and social elements in his environment. Finally, Piaget suggests that the early years have great potential for intellectual growth.

Hunt (1961) tried to make Piaget's theories more concrete and to relate them to practice. He argued that intellectual growth was maximized if experiences were an appropriate "match" for the child's cognitive structures. Finally, Bloom (1964) concluded that the rate of development is greatest during the first six years of life. Together, these theories were interpreted to mean that in order to maximize children's development, early childhood is the critical period for intervention.

Concurrently with research on child development and cognition, a spirit of social reform pervaded the 1960s. Early childhood education became the focus of President Johnson's War on Poverty. In 1965 Project Head Start was funded to provide compensatory preschool experience for poor and disadvantaged children. From 1960 to 1972 federal funds for preschool programs rose from near zero to approximately $1 billion. At the same time the number of private nursery schools increased dramatically, and more states began to offer public kindergarten programs.

5.1.2 Increased Parental Involvement. The clearest trend in early education since the 1960s is the continued emphasis on parent involvement in educational programs for young children. It is expressed in many terms: parent education, parent training, using parents as program resources, and promoting public accountability of educational programs are a few of the more common. The manner in which parents are involved may vary according to the ages of their children. Numerous federal education programs have encouraged, if not required, parent participation in programs for young children.

Datta (1975) attributes the trend toward increased parent involvement to six factors: 1) evidence that parents determine more of their children's educational achievement than schools do; 2) increased concern for the first five years of life, when parents traditionally have responsibility for a child's development; 3) failure of school programs to provide equal education outcomes to poor children; 4) increased demand for citizen participation in decision making in all sections of society; 5) increased appreciation of the positive aspects of cultural diversity; and 6) increasing awareness of the need for parent education.

5.1.3 Comprehensive Services. A third trend is the multidisciplinary coordination of comprehensive services for disadvantaged children. In part this has evolved from the tradition in early childhood education, of concern for the total development of the child. In part, too, it is due to growing concern that poor children and their families lack many basic resources, including health care and nutrition. Recently, concern for comprehensive services has been expressed in terms of the need for ecological approaches to early intervention, intervention that will change the immediate environment of the child and his family (Bronfenbrenner, 1974).

5.1.4 State Coordination of Early Education. A fourth trend described by Haney is toward making early childhood education public and coordinating educational programs at the state level. As of mid-1973, fourteen states had established child development offices and four more had placed authority for child development activities in their state education departments. In 1972 California passed legislation to establish public early childhood education, beginning on a voluntary basis at age four and extending until age eight. Of all early childhood programs public kindergartens appear to have the widest support, and it has been predicted that all fifty states will offer them by 1980.

On the other hand, there is some concern that state coordination of early childhood education will result in an excessive focus on academic readiness and cognition, to the detriment of social and emotional development.

5.1.5 Individualization. A fifth major trend in early childhood education is toward designing flexible educational programs to fit individual children's needs--individualization. Its proponents emphasize the unique features of each child and the need to provide education programs that meet them. They argue strongly against a single curriculum applied to supposedly homogeneous groups of children. The concept of individualization is especially prominent in special education, where it is associated with early screening and diagnostic-prescriptive teaching.

5.1.6 Mainstreaming. A final trend in early education, mainstreaming, also derives largely from the field of special education. The concept refers to integrating children with special needs into the mainstream of regular classroom activities instead of segregating them in special classes. The trend is due to concern that separate classes were providing inadequate services, and that they had the unintended effect of labeling children in negative ways (Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens v. the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1972).

Mainstreaming has in recent years gained considerable impetus. On the national level, Project Head Head Start regulations were changed in 1972 to require all Head Start centers to include handicapped children as part of their population. More recently, various state laws (e.g., Massachusetts Chapter 766) and the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (PL 94-142) require SEAs to assure that "to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children...are educated with children who are not handicapped" (Section 612 (5) B).

Mainstreaming is potentially relevant to ECT I programs, for reasons elaborated in various sources (Divoky, 1976; Glass and Smith, 1977) and summarized by Haney (1978). In brief, the arguments for mainstreaming Title I children are that it will prevent negative attitudes toward handicapped or disadvantaged that are based on ignorance of misunderstandings; and that it will avoid the trauma of later mainstreaming and the invidious labeling of compensatory education pupils.

5.2 A Focus on Early Childhood Title I Projects

All these trends in early childhood education are present in early childhood Title I programs but in a form that reflects the requirements of Title I, its regulations and the ways various people have interpreted them. The major difference is the heavier emphasis ECT I programs place on basic academic skills. The written material for virtually every LEA we visited describes primary objectives in reading or reading readiness, language acquisition or language arts, and mathematical reasoning and computation. That unanimity on the importance of these curricular objectives is not shared by early childhood practitioners in general. For other early childhood education programs, particularly those deriving from a more developmental or psychosocial perspective, these are simply not valued short-term goals. In Title I, by contrast, the program focus on developing competence in basic skills clearly seems to have affected the emphasis of ECT I programs. The basic skills emphasis is generally interpreted in the early childhood domain as requiring instruction in reading readiness, language development, and mathematics.

On balance, however, we must emphasize that these narrow objectives are only part of the goals of many early childhood Title I programs. Many include

important instrumental goals in one or more of the following areas: social growth and development, perceptual-motor or psychomotor development, gross motor development, and behavioral organization. Sometimes the instrumental goals were embedded in the basic skills objectives. For example, one pre-kindergarten program stated that its purposes were:

> ...to develop language skills and reading readiness by synthesizing perceptual and cognitive skills such as the development of skills in discrimination, spacial relationships, and sequencing and classification.

In other instances they were listed separately:

- to prepare children for school by developing competence in language, mathematics, language arts and science
- to foster social development, self-image and motivational development
- to provide an individualized program for every child
- to promote the role of parents as the primary educators of their own children and to teach parents to teach.

Or again:

- to improve language skills
- to improve fine motor skills
- to improve self-image
- to improve cognitive competence.

Even first-grade programs usually went beyond providing instruction in reading, language, and mathematics, aspiring "to improve affective and psychomotor behavior."

Many programs did more than specify child outcome goals; they described the types of experience they expected children to have. These might be stated as follows: to provide opportunities for each child to

- feel accepted
- interact with peers and adults
- experience success daily
- express his ideas and feelings in a constructive way
- to respect the rights of others;

and to help the child

- increase his vocabulary
- communicate more effectively
- grow in independence and initiative
- understand the world around him and how to live in it
- develop problem solving skills.

Finally, in many cases the written objectives given in evaluation reports and annual applications do not adequately portray program practice. For example, one kindergarten program specified its goals this way:

1. By May, total test scores on the Stanford Early Achievement Test for 75% of the pupils with Slossen IQs of 90 and above will fall at or above the 25th percentile.

2. By May, 60% of the pupils will understand the vocabulary of beginning mathematics, recognize geometric shapes, recognize and write numbers and count objects, and will demonstrate this proficiency by responding correctly to 75% or more of the items on a locally developed criterion-referenced test.

3. By May, 80% of the pupils will demonstrate a greater degree of language facility as indicated by 10% improvement in the number right on pre and posttesting using the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test.

These statements of objectives are drawn from written descriptions of ECT I. In our field research, observing the program in action and talking with teachers, principals, and parents sometimes produced a different picture than might have been envisioned from reading such descriptions. One site visitor reported:

> There was a lot going on. There were different centers here and there. The children's work was all around. One table had paper flowers that the children had made. On another there were three-dimensional houses, each of which had a child's address on it. The teacher explained that she was trying to teach the children where they lived and how to recognize the way home. There were a lot of materials. There were books and games as well as shells and minerals for kids to play with. It was the liveliest and most impressive classroom I have visited. The teacher seemed to know what each of the kids was doing and to be actively involved in what was going on.

When they were interviewed informally, teachers in the program said that they were concerned with the development of the whole child and that their operational goals included developing children's readiness skills, but also fostering self-awareness and positive self-concepts.

The written material on this program clearly reflected Title I expectations of well-defined behavioral objectives in the areas of early academic achievement, particularly in reading, mathematics, and language. In practice, it is much broader, reflecting a philosophical and pedagogic perspective common to early childhood education in general. In some LEAs there is substantial tension between interpreting Title I requirements and what they consider to be good program practice in the early childhood domain.

5.2.1 Prominence of ECT I Projects. We could document no increase in ECT I programs. Our evidence suggests that it is, at best, holding its own and in fact may be decreasing. Among the state officials with whom we spoke, opinion about the future of ECT I was almost equally divided between those who envisioned increased program emphasis and those who anticipated sharp cutbacks. In this issue as in so many others, the specter of compliance was apparent. Three compliance issues were cited as potential deterrents to early childhood Title I projects: incompatability between the ostensible requirement that Title I programs be academic programs, and the conviction that good early childhood education does far more; the almost insurmountable difficulties in meeting evaluation requirements and still do justice to programs; and the potential problem of supplanting instead of supplementing existing services. Using a narrow construction of the last point, some people contend that providing prekindergarten and kindergarten programs can supplant state or local efforts, and that Title I services can be legally introduced only as supplements to existing programs.

Other SEAs interpret the law and its requirements more liberally. In these cases, ECT I programs are more secure, and state officials seem to take the position that early childhood education programs in fact supplement the total district program and hence are allowable. They tend also to take a broader view of the contribution that early childhood experiences make to later school success. As one said,

> ...if you help a child develop his fine motor skills now, you will help him in a multitude of ways later. He may read better, write better and play better baseball. There is no single line between early developmental competence and academic performance in a single domain.

At the local level, ECT I programs had enthusiastic constituencies among both school personnel and parents. We met with groups of both and were impressed with the solidarity of their support. We do not, however, have a true sense of how much weight this support has in the various communities, although in one outstanding prekindergarten program, organized parents' groups had been highly effective in preventing funding cutbacks. Nor do we have a sense of the potential interest in ECT I programs in areas where they do not exist.

Comparison of the summary tables of the FY 75, 76 and 77 Annual State Performance and Accounting Reports prepared by the Division of Education for the Disadvantaged show an equally uncertain picture of the future direction of ECT I. These figures are presented in Table 5.1. Looking first at the percentage of children in Title I enrolled in prekindergarten and kindergarten programs, we see that although it remained the same between 1975 and 1976 (8%), it declined 1% in 1977 (to 7%). While the drop is not great, it is a substantial portion of an already small percentage.

Of the fifty-six states and territories included in the count, fourteen showed some increase in the proportion of Title I recipients enrolled in

Table 5.1

TITLE I PARTICIPATION BY STATE FOR FISCAL YEARS 1975, 1976 AND 1977: PREKINDERGARTEN, KINDERGARTEN AND TOTAL (PREK TO GRADE 12)

STATE	FISCAL YEAR 1975			FISCAL YEAR 1976			FISCAL YEAR 1977			DIRECTION OF CHANGE OCT-I 1976-1977
	TOTAL (PRE-K - 12)	PRE-K - K	%PRE-K - K	TOTAL (PRE-K - 12)	PRE-K - K	%PRE-K - K	TOTAL (PRE-K - 12)	PRE-K - K	% PRE-K - K	
TOTALS	4,524,530	360,662	.08	5,055,353	404,683	.08	4,320,707	314,630	.07	-
Alabama	146,866	7,960	.05	145,170	9,187	.06	134,036	10,975	.08	-
Alaska	5,191	860	.17	5,501	1,015	.18	5,707	830	.14	+
Arizona	61,290	3,762	.07	56,097	4,561	.08	61,794	4,896	.07	+
Arkansas	68,620	1,303	.02	70,225	1,846	.03	75,887	2,803	.04	+
California	690,960	85,268	.14	NA	NA	NA	675,854	-	-	
Colorado	56,646	2,888	.05	NA	NA	NA	51,077	1,590	.05	0
Connecticut	56,650	447	.01	51,193	8,188	.16	50,762	8,016	.16	0
Delaware				9,564	1,038	.11	9,715	260	.03	+
Florida	122,619	7,506	.06	148,787	11,560	.08	164,987	9,057	.05	+
Georgia	141,430	15,900	.10	122,721	16,117	.13	141,258	19,994	.14	+
Hawaii	8,237	637	.08	10,234	701	.08	11,469	829	.07	+
Idaho	10,579	1,037	.06	14,862	134	.01	10,809	147	.01	0
Illinois	171,860	16,566	.10	189,992	16,575	.10	149,595	11,885	.08	-
Indiana	107,980	8,150	.08	NA	NA	NA	101,511	7,157	.07	-
Iowa	60,960	-	-	56,113	1,668	.03	50,717	1,458	.03	0
Kansas	54,335	2,750	.05	55,487	2,388	.04	55,460	1,559	.03	-
Kentucky	114,782	5,326	.05	112,757	4,071	.04	109,831	4,887	.04	+
Louisiana	137,317	7,351	.05	150,402	10,500	.07	154,489	11,101	.07	+
Maine	36,050	2,620	.07	31,373	3,113	.07	39,580	4,349	.11	+
Maryland	NA	NA	NA	62,853	13,645	.20	66,795	14,616	.22	+
Massachusetts	77,129	10,705	.14	67,957	9,278	.14	67,440	9,102	.14	0
Michigan	127,172	19,583	.15	NA	NA	NA	148,685	20,612	.15	-
Minnesota	56,267	6,411	.11	71,354	4,688	.06	61,142	5,615	.09	+
Mississippi	139,962	1,881	.01	121,429	1,171	.01	121,225	1,214	.01	+
Missouri	76,848	4,736	.06	83,312	5,363	.06	91,685	5,511	.06	0
Montana	7,893	60	.01	11,313	85	.01	10,870	126	.01	+
Nebraska	35,737	1,089	.05	31,445	963	.03	29,603	861	.03	+
Nevada	2,646	-	.00	5,582	120	.02	5,073	111	.02	+
New Hampshire	6,615	225	.04	7,000	150	.02	7,348	540	.07	+
New Jersey	92,664	11,880	.13	103,586	15,006	.14	99,653	15,157	.15	+
New Mexico	22,060	4,614	.20	28,441	4,422	.16	27,248	1,936	.07	+
New York	403,350	25,680	.06	419,540	10,005	.02	360,631	7,962	.02	+
North Carolina	133,161	11,554	.09	129,890	9,558	.07	136,144	1,546	.01	+
North Dakota	14,056	--	.00	14,081	75	.01	14,552	230	.02	+
Ohio	130,561	12,060	.10	132,930	13,331	.10	125,044	12,958	.10	+
Oklahoma	79,696	140	.00	94,155	100	.00	104,254	2,431	.02	+
Oregon	48,867	2,284	.05	47,498	2,862	.06	38,928	1,825	.05	+
Pennsylvania	251,288	15,284	.05	278,371	18,755	.07	282,184	20,006	.07	+
Rhode Island	18,872	71	.00	25,252	208	.01	15,363	1,261	.08	+
South Carolina	144,876	5,110	.04	133,124	3,512	.03	125,101	2,545	.02	+
South Dakota	19,680	2,177	.11	16,814	998	.05	15,610	616	.04	+
Tennessee	NA	NA	NA	122,550	6,965	.06	98,273	6,194	.06	-
Texas	367,635	32,730	.10	408,765	39,853	.10	430,336	48,457	.11	+
Utah	35,752	3,531	.10	16,265	2,352	.15	18,930	2,510	.13	+
Vermont	12,660	1,366	.11	13,055	1,306	.10	12,445	1,284	.10	0
Virginia	100,161	2,930	.03	100,987	4,742	.05	97,303	3,632	.04	+
Washington	70,505	2,316	.04	66,665	3,531	.05	64,415	3,417	.05	-
West Virginia	42,915	60	.00	42,913	30	.00	42,930	0	NI	0
Wisconsin	55,137	14,709	.28	61,973	16,460	.27	60,454	15,004	.25	+
Wyoming	8,577	234	.04	3,523	--	.00	4,965	192	.03	+
District of Columbia	17,000	2,250	.13	16,600	3,220	.19	16,900	2,100	.13	-
American Samoa	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	0	0	NI	NI
Guam	1,345	--	.00	1,350	--	.00	1,242	0	NI	NI
Puerto Rico	NA	NA	NA	230,812	6,574	.03	171,289	3,212	.02	-
Trust Territory	17,360	NA	.00	7,907	20	.00	7,907	20	NI	NI
Virgin Islands	1,745	288	.16	NA	NA	NA	2,101	0	NI	NI

Source: "Fiscal Year 1975 Performance Reports - Total Number of Children Participating" and "ESEA Title I - Number of Children Participating by Grade Level - Fiscal Year 1976", Summary Tables of the Annual State Performance and Accounting Reports, prepared by Division of Education for the Disadvantaged, copies obtained from Jim Ogura. Excludes participation State institutions. NA means data not available.

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these programs. On the other hand, we see in the 1977 data that fifteen states show a decrease in the percentage of Title I recipients enrolled in prekindergarten and kindergarten programs. In some states, declines are substantial; in one case, the percentage of Title I students enrolled in kindergarten and prekindergarten programs declined by almost 10%. We note, however, that no 1977 figures are available for the remaining eight states and territories.

Comparing percentages reported in prekindergarten and kindergarten programs across the three years for which performance and accounting report data are available, we see that enrollments are fairly stable. Most changes across the years are fairly small, and no firm conclusions regarding the time trends should be drawn. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that among the states with increased ECT I program activity (in terms of prekindergarten and kindergarten enrollments), eight have done so steadily over the last three years. Among those that are reducing enrollments, eleven have shown steady declines over the same period.

In summary, no strong overall trends are apparent in these data. The strongest thing that can be said is that overall, the frequency ECT I programs is much what it has been since FY 1975. However, unlike early childhood programs in general, they clearly have not increased substantially. If anything, emphasis on the early childhood area within Title I has decreased, at least at the prekindergarten and kindergarten level. In closing, we remind the reader that we have no data on first-grade enrollments, because performance and accounting reports do not give separate data for the first grade.

5.2.2 Parent Involvement. One feature ECT I programs definitely share with early education programs generally is the increased emphasis on parent education and parent involvement. This is discussed at greater length in chapter 9 of this report; we mention it here only to confirm its importance to ECT I programs and to

substantiate their conformance to the general trend. We found parent involvement to be particularly prominent in programs for very young children, while it decreases in those serving older children. There is more parent activity at the prekindergarten and kindergarten level than in first grade. Program people generally speculate that this is because parents become less interested in education as their child grows older; we noted, however, that there seemed to be more outreach and more planned activities for parents of very young children. This is undoubtedly due to many factors, not the least of which is administrative feasibility.

5.2.3 Comprehensive Services. Perhaps because of the general emphasis on basic skills, ECT I stresses comprehensive services much less than early childhood programs generally. Our sample of ECT I programs showed little evidence of comprehensive services for young children and their families, although a few did offer limited support services to children in extreme circumstances (eyeglasses, clothing, and the like). The task of educating educationally disadvantaged children or children with educational deficits in ECT I generally, however, seems to be narrowly defined. Supplementary services are viewed as peripheral, perhaps even forbidden by Title I regulations, and even in sites that provide some such services there seems to be a tendency to de-emphasize them. It is not clear, however, that local programs universally welcome this shift. In many cases, it appears to be a response to general anxiety about regulations and the need to comply.

5.2.4 Coordination of Services. The fourth trend noted with respect to early childhood education generally was the apparent increased coordination of early childhood programming. With respect to ECT I, our evidence on this trend is again mixed. Some state Title I offices do have early childhood education specialists who provide assistance and some degree of coordination among LEAs. In other cases,

however, ECT I programs seem to have been initiated exclusively by LEA personnel and receive little direction from the state level, apart from direction concerning Title I regulations and requirements.

5.2.5 Individualization. Another way in which ECT I projects are consistent with general trends in early education is in their increased concern with individual services for children. This topic, too, will be discussed at greater length in a subsequent chapter of this report. However, as an indication of ECT I responsiveness to the general state of the art of early childhood education, it merits brief mention here. The concept of individualization is a complex one and in practice takes many different forms. Within ECT I, one variant seems to predominate. We shall call this a developmental profile approach. In many programs, teachers and/or developmental evaluators assess each child either at point of entry (screening) or at point of pretest. Using an instrument of local choice, they rank each child on a continuum in each of several skills areas. For example, using the Santa Clara Plus Inventory of Developmental Tasks (Zweig, 1976), the teacher can develop a profile on the child's competence in motor coordination, visual motor performance, visual perception, visual memory, auditory perception, auditory memory, language development, and conceptual development. This information is then used to decide what kind of instruction the child should receive. Several children with similar needs may be grouped for instruction. Individual profiles are reviewed periodically and instructional goals adjusted.

A more rigorous conception of individualization involves taking into account not only a child's achievement level on various dimensions, but also his particular learning style, interests, and previous experiences. In only a few programs did we see evidence of this type of emphasis.

5.2.6 Mainstreaming. The issue of mainstreaming is of quite different relevance at the different ECT I levels. In prekindergarten programs, pull-outs are generally not relevant, because these programs tend to exist as independent entities and children are not drawn out of other educational programs to receive Title I services. The issue of mainstreaming versus pull-out is not very salient at the kindergarten level, either, again probably due to the nature of program organization. When Title I provides kindergartens in the absence of any regular public kindergarten, the issue obviously is moot. When Title I kindergarten services co-exist with regular public kindergarten, the issue is also often not relevant because the former tend to take the form of extended day kindergartens. Thus, there is no necessity to pull children out of regular programs in order to provide them with Title I services. At the first grade level, mainstreaming versus pull-out programs is a potentially relevant issue in many cases. As noted in chapter 3, we observed slightly more pull-out programs than any other kind at first grade--a finding consistent with program patterns at later grade levels. In a few LEAs, people with whom we talked did express concern that removing first grade children from their regular classrooms in order to receive compensatory services might stigmatize them, but this was rare. Indeed, in one case Title I personnel openly scoffed at the idea that their pull-out program might have such conseuqences. "The children all love to go to the resource room," they recounted.

5.3. Summary

In this chapter we have reviewed the six trends in early childhood education identified in phase I of our project (Haney et al., 1978). Against this backdrop, we then reported what we had learned about ECT I as compared with trends in early childhood education generally. In some respects, ECT I seems to reflect broader patterns of ECE, but in other respects it does not.

The most notable difference was that ECT I focuses more heavily on what might be called the basic skills of early schooling than does early childhood education generally. A related difference is that ECT I places much less emphasis on providing comprehensive services than other early childhood education programs.

In two respects ECT I seems to conform to the broader trends in early childhood education. First, there is considerable emphasis on parent involvement, particularly at the prekindergarten level. Second, much concern about program individualization was apparent in the ECT I programs we visited. We shall return to this aspect of the ECT I curriculum in chapter 7.

On other points we found no clear patterns. Each state we visited provides some direction for overall Title I policies. In terms of coordinating early childhood activities, however, we found evidence of strong influences in some SEAs but much less in others. On the mainstreaming issue, all of the concerns raised about Title I programs in general--i.e., supplanting versus supplementing distinctions and the need for pull-outs are mirrored in first-grade projects.

Thus, ECT I represents an unusual hybrid of general early childhood trends somewhat transformed by the special requirements of Title I. Important programmatic issues that emerge out of this hybridization are discussed and analyzed in the remaining chapters of this part.

CHAPTER 6. NEEDS ASSESSMENT, RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Needs Assessment

6.3 Recruitment

6.4 Selection

- 6.4.1 Determining Eligibility
- 6.4.2 Criteria for Selection
- 6.4.3 Placing Limits on Enrollment
- 6.4.4 Opening the Doors

6.5 Review of Standardized Tests Used

6.6 Summary

6.1 Introduction

There are some distinctive features of early childhood Title I programs that differentiate them from later-grade programs (e.g., grades two through twelve) and have important implications for needs assessment, recruitment, and selection. In grades two through twelve, Title I provides for supplementary educational services for those children in low-income neighborhoods who are designated "educationally disadvantaged." A common example of this is the pull-out reading program that extends existing reading activities. Operationally, however, providing supplementary services for educationally disadvantaged children in the early childhood domain is a particularly vexing problem.

Regular school programs fulfill several important functions for Title I. First, they generate local normative criteria for educational disadvantage--children's ability to perform at the level of their peers. Second, they are a ready mechanism for identifying the children who should be served: those who are having the most difficulty in school. Third, all regular school programs have some statement of goals, objectives and curricula, and these provide a base for deciding what additional services are to be provided by Title I.

The situation is very different for ECT I programs, particularly at the prekindergarten level. Again, we must distinguish among ECT I programs. The remarks that follow pertain to all prekindergarten projects and to those kindergarten projects that take the character of preschool programs. They are less relevant for first-grade projects, which as a rule resemble those in later grades. Unlike later-grade programs, prekindergartens are self-contained and usually have no counterpart within the public school system. This difference results in several problems. First, there are no normative criteria for defining educational disadvantage. Program staff must establish criteria by looking outside the LEA to the

results of theory and applied research. However, neither child development theories nor clinical practice clearly define educational disadvantage for a child before school entry, or the functional competence that a child must have in order to assure later academic success. In spite of some work in this area (e.g., White, 1973), few agree on the exact constellation of skills that comprises early competence and is necessary to prevent school failure. Educators have only a general sense that some youngsters appear to be "behind" their peers at entry into school. If they are far enough behind, it may be difficult or impossible for them to learn satisfactorily upon school entry. Difficulties within the first months of school may set patterns that lead to subsequent school failure. Simple logic suggests looking back to early experience, before the deficit becomes apparent--back to the period before school entry--as the moment to intervene. This point is a cornerstone in the rationale for almost all major early childhood initiatives (Haney, 1978).

Second, since the preschool programs stand alone and serve a limited number of children, no information exists on the past development of all children in the district, nor is there even a list of potential candidates for ECT I services. Therefore, two new problems arise: recruitment and screening. Children must be recruited for the program, and screening procedures must be instituted to identify those eligible for Title I services. Concurrently, some resources must be expended to identify and screen out children who are not eligible. The selection process also confronts problems of instrumentation. The state of the art in the measurement in early child development is not advanced. Many facets of learning and development simply cannot be tapped by existing tests (Haney, 1978). Given the absence of past performance data on children and the crude state of measurement, selection must often rely on variables such as social and demographic factors.

Finally, since there is usually no general district program that provides a foundation for prekindergarten efforts, program personnel must seek guidance in early child development theories to decide what services to provide for ECT I participants. There are several competing theories, however, which suggest different emphasis for program activities. Different theories and different needs assessment procedures derived from them may result in identification of different children to be served.

6.2 Needs Assessment

Needs assessment is the process by which LEAs determine: (1) which groups of pupils within Title I-eligible areas are most in need of services, and (2) what services will receive highest district priority. Program staff, LEA administrators, PACs, and evaluators are often involved in needs assessment. The most common methods are examination of grade-by-grade pupil test performance, teacher observation, teacher or parent surveys, and analysis of previous Title I program evaluation results. Needs assessment often influences--or at least justifies--major program changes, such as extension to unserved grade levels or elimination of program components at other levels. Our field research did not specifically focus on local needs assessment procedures, although information on this topic is available from several of our interviews. As a result, the following discussion is somewhat brief and tentative.

From what we saw and read, we have a sense that assessment of operational needs is not the rational decision-making process it might be thought to be. Rather, it often serves to fulfill the requirements of the law and to muster support for decisions already made on other grounds. For example, in one district we visited, reading achievement scores were analyzed as one part of a two-tiered needs assessment process. Scores dropped sharply in third grade and remained low

in fourth grade. Concurrently with the analysis, parents and teachers completed a survey questionnaire probing their opinions on the educational needs of children in the district. Their responses indicated that early childhood was a priority area and that they would like to see ECT I programs at the prekindergarten level. The following academic year, LEA staff implemented two Title I programs: a remedial reading project with primary emphasis on the third and fourth grades, and a prekindergarten project. LEA staff reported that they had considered the two types of input separately. They made no attempt to analyze where the low-scoring third grade children came from: had they started school in the district or recently moved there? Neither were there plans for longitudinal analysis of the test scores of children about to enter prekindergarten. Apparently there was no interest in the question of whether their achievement level by third grade would differ from that of children who had not had the program. The point here is that the decision to implement a prekindergarten program, while not inconsistent with the problem of low third-grade scores, was simply not based on systematic investigation of the reason for these scores. In this case, it appeared that parent and teacher sentiment dictated the decision.

In fairness, even those who would like to use needs assessment in the framework of decision-making theory are frustrated by various problems. What is required is: (1) a theory for linking early experience to later function, (2) valid measures of important developmental variables, and (3) research into the relationship between early experience and later functioning. As we have suggested here, and as emphasized by Bryk et al. (1978), each of these elements is seriously deficient.

6.3 Recruitment

In grades two to six, Title I programs for the most part receive their

potential students via referral from other district school staff. The criteria for referrals are: evidence from school testing programs, records from previous academic years, and professional judgement. If a child has not been in the system before, as for example with prekindergarten children, these data do not exist. Therefore, program staff must recruit children by some other means.

LEA staff we visited reported using various methods or combinations of methods to identify and recruit potential students for prekindergarten programs. Perhaps the simplest and most common is to contact younger siblings of former ECT I participants or of children currently receiving Title I services in other grades. Frequently, LEAs used contacts wtih other community service agencies (visiting nurses, well-baby clinics, churches, social service departments, etc.) to identify families that have children potentially eligible for ECT I. These families are then contacted by mail or in person. In some LEAs, teachers reach out directly to families, visiting them at home, explaining the project, and describing its services. Many LEAs reported using more indirect recruitment methods such as publishing announcements in local newspapers or shoppers' bulletins, and posting signs in markets, laundromats, and drug stores. Others had announcements read at church services or community social events.

The effort expended in recruiting children varied considerably across the LEAs we visited. In some places it was very limited. Staff reported that they had little trouble recruiting children to fill available program spaces, and in fact, often found themselves with too many. But this was the exception rather than the rule. More typically, active effort was essential in order to fill the program.

Two considerations appear to explain this difference across LEAs. First, the length of time that the program has been in place seems to be important. All programs initiated within the last two years faced major recruitment efforts in order to attract children and families. Most older projects, particularly those

with "good local press," have no difficulty. Second, there is the issue of supply and demand. In LEAs where recruitment was difficult, the number of children who could be served sometimes exceeded the local demand for services. In some larger LEAs, multiple early childhood programs (e.g., Title I projects, Head Start, local nursery schools), compete for the same pool of children. Alternatively, in smaller, rural communities the Title I program might be the only early childhood effort available, but the number of children of appropriate age residing in the LEA might be very small.

An important question to ask about these recruitment efforts is, "Are LEAs reaching the children who need the services most?" We raised this for discussion in every LEA and SEA we visited. Staff in general were quite candid. They felt that the children they were recruiting truly need services. However, they often also feared that they were missing other children with educational needs. For the most part, they simply didn't know what else to do. There was general agreement that personal recommendations, for instance by word of mouth from former program families, were most effective. Procedures that relied upon parent initiative (e.g., posters and the like) were less useful and perhaps yielded a biased group of families. We were told in several places that families whose children most need special educational services are the least likely to seek them out on their own.

6.4 Selection

The process of selecting children for ECT I projects involves several steps. We have discussed the first of these: needs assessment and recruitment of children in an eligible area. The remainder deal with determining eligibility criteria for children within an attendance area and selecting children to participate. These two steps do not seem to be clearly differentiated in all LEAs, but since they are in some, we discuss them separately here. We will then comment on two

more general issues in ECT I selection.

6.4.1 Determining Eligibility. Criteria for eligibility vary across LEAs. Those that we visited used one or more of the following:

- a low score on a test or series of tests
- teacher judgment
- a sibling who is or was a Title I student
- parents with less than a high school education
- inability to understand the language of instruction
- parent judgment

Virtually every LEA uses some form of standardized test in selection. The extent to which they rely on these tests in making the final decision varies considerably. At one extreme, test scores constitute a virtual decision rule. If a child's scores fall within the eligible range, he or she must be included in the program. If it does not, the child cannot attend. At the other extreme, tests are used more to satisfy potential compliance inquiries, and actual selection decisions may be made on other grounds. A more central position uses test scores in combination with other criteria listed above. The appropriate weighting of these factors remains problematic, however,

Many argue that teachers can best judge which children need compensatory education services. "A test score is only a one-time approximation of ability and at best a weak indication of need," they say. As one LEA director put it, "the teacher is the one who knows the child best." Another concurred but argued that there must be some way of systematically combining teacher judgment and other information. A third also agreed that teacher judgment was important and should be used but wanted it to be systematized and elicited more formally.

In fairness, it must be reported that few programs used only one strategy. Most used a combination to test evidence and teacher judgment. Moreover, in

several LEAs, if teacher judgment was used to overrule test evidence, additional testing was done to support the decision.

6.4.2 Criteria for Selection. In several states we visited, selection criteria are determined at the state level. State evaluation and application guidelines may require, for example, that participants be chosen from those scoring at or below a given percentile on an objective test. The actual cut-off differs across states, ranging from the sixtieth percentile to the thirty-third.

Some states specify no selection criteria, leaving it to the discretion of local program and evaluation staff. As a result, selection standards for ECT I projects vary not only from state to state, but also often from LEA to LEA within a state.

6.4.3 Placing Limits on Enrollment. Some early childhood programs have too few openings for the number of applicants and must place limits on whom they accept. One large LEA does so by screening candidates on a first-come-first-serve basis. When they have identified the maximum number of children meeting their selection criteria whom they can accommodate (scores at or below the fiftieth percentile on a standardized test), they simply stop testing.

Several LEAs make parent involvement a critical variable for selecting a child for an ECT I program. In one LEA, parents must be able to transport children to and from the program. In another, they must participate in program activities if the child is to remain enrolled. They had to assist in the classroom regularly, or to provide supplementary services such as preparing food for special events. Regular child attendance was also used as a selection criterion. Parents were told that if their child's absences were excessive, the child would be dropped from the program. On more than one occasion this LEA gave an initial warning and then did, in fact, request withdrawal.

6.4.4 Opening the Doors. In other areas, however, several project directors reported that they try never to turn a child away. "If they want to come, we'll find a way to take them," one director said. Such an "open door policy" reflected a number of concerns. First, early childhood staff generally regarded their programs as measures to prevent later school failure. Since the factors determining or predisposing children to later failure are poorly understood, they wanted to "cast a wide net." They felt that the more children their program reached, the more might benefit from its preventive function. One director said, "You can't always tell who needs it most. I'd like to give them all a try."

Other directors argued that in order to ensure heterogeneity, children with a variety of needs must be included. Children learn from one another, they reasoned, and the more diversity within the group, the greater the learning potential for all. Ironically, several people reported that for prekindergarten and kindergarten children, who were new to the school system and hence largely unknown to teachers and program personnel, selection procedures were likely to depend more heavily on test scores than were those for older children. This was particularly problematic because of the limited technical quality and prescriptive usefulness of tests for young children (see Bryk, Apling and Mathews, 1978, for a more detailed discussion on current measurement procedures).

6.5 Review of Standardized Tests Used

LEA staff reported that they used various tests for selection. Usually these served more than one purpose. They were almost always used as the pretest measure for program evaluations, and frequently also in a diagnostic/precriptive manner. In these sites, selection tests were chosen because of their capability to identify individual needs and hence were used as the first step in developing an individual education plan.

Table 6.1 summarizes the tests that LEAs reportedly used for selection. Unfortunately, we sometimes had difficulty in exactly identifying the test used, because LEA reports were incomplete. For example, it was not always clear whether sites said to be using the "Metropolitan" were using the Metropolitan Readiness Test or the Metropolitan Achievement Test. Hence, we have sometimes had to guess, on the basis of name and grade level, at which tests were referred to.

Perhaps the most striking feature of Table 6.1 is the variety of tests used for screening in ECT I programs. At the preschool level there is an especially wide array. Only four measures--Caldwell Cooperative Preschool Inventory, the Denver Developmental Screening Test, Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) and the Test of Basic Experiences (TOBE)--are reported used in more than one of the sites we visited.

We see the same thing in kindergarten. If anything, there is more diversity here than in prekindergarten and first grade. This reflects the Janus-like nature of kindergarten programs--resembling prekindergarten programs in some districts and first-grade programs in others. Several tests are reportedly used in more than one site--the Boehm Test of Basic Concepts, the Test of Basic Experience (TOBE), and the Metropolitan Readiness Test being the most common.

As we more into first grade, we see some thirteen different tests used for screening. Only four, however--the Metropolitan Readiness, the Stanford Achievement Test, the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS), and the Boehm--were used in more than one of the sites we visited.

There is a substantive shift in tests used at different grade levels. In prekindergarten, tests of general intelligence and knowledge predominate, whereas in first grade, selection is based more on readiness and achievement tests. Many of the screening instruments listed in Table 6.1 have a local geographic history.

Table 6.1

NUMBER OF LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES REPORTING USE OF TEST BY GRADE AND FUNCTION

TEST NAME	GRADE LEVEL					
	Preschool		Kindergarten		First Grade	
	Evaluation	Selection	Evaluation	Selection	Evaluation	Selectio
ABC Inventory	0	0	1	3	0	0
Boehm Test of Basic Concepts	7	2	5	6	1	3
Beery, Visual Motor Integration	3	2	1	2	0	0
Carrow Screening Test for Auditory Comp. of Lang	2	0	0	0	0	0
California Achievement Test	0	0	0	0	6	2
Caldwell Cooperative Preschool Inventory	4	4	0	1	0	0
Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills	1	0	3	1	5	3
Columbia Mental Maturity Scale	1	1	0	1	0	0
Denver Developmental Screening Test	1	4	0	0	0	0
Dolch, Basic Sight Words	0	0	0	0	1	0
Early Detection Inventory	0	1	0	0	0	0
Gates McGinitie Reading Test	0	0	0	0	1	1
Goodenough-Harris Drawing Test	1	0	0	1	0	0
Illinois Test of Psycho-linguistic Abilities	1	1	0	0	0	0
Iowa Test of Basic Skills	0	0	0	0	1	1
McCarthy Scales of Children's Abilities	1	0	0	1	0	0
Metropolitan Achievement Test	0	0	0	0	4	1
Metropolitan Readiness Test	2	0	5	5	3	8
Peabody Individual Achievement Test	0	0	0	1	1	1
Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test	2	3	3	2	1	0
Stanford Early School Achievement Test	0	0	2	2	5	7
Slosson Intelligence Test	1	1	0	1	0	1
Test of Basic Experience	3	2	4	4	1	1
Wide Range Achievement	0	0	0	0	1	0

Table 6.1 continued

NUMBER OF LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES REPORTING
USE OF TEST BY GRADE AND FUNCTION

TEST NAME	GRADE LEVEL					
	Preschool		Kindergarten		First Grade	
	Evaluation	Selection	Evaluation	Selection	Evaluation	Selectic
Bilingual Syntax Measure (BSM)	1	0	1	0	1	0
CIRCUS	3	0	1	0	1	0
Gumpgookies	1	0	0	0	0	0
Santa Clara Inventory of Developmental Tasks	2	1	1	0	1	0
Screening Test of Academic Readiness	0	0	1	0	0	0
SRA	0	0	0	0	0	1
Templin-Darley Test of Articulation	0	1	0	0	0	0
Walker Readiness Test	1	1	0	0	0	0
Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children	0	1	0	0	0	0

For example, the DDST was developed in Denver and is used throughout Colorado. The Meeting Street School Screening Test was developed in Rhode Island and is apparently used widely in New England. Accessibility to the test developers and their technical assistance no doubt contributes to the phenomenon.

Finally, in addition to the tests listed in Table 6.1, there is a large number of locally developed criterion-referenced tests (CRTs). The range of content areas these are reported to cover includes language, reading readiness, psychomotor skills, social and emotional development, self-concept, problem solving, and mathematical readiness.

There was widespread concern, both at the LEA and the SEA level, about the processes and tests available for selecting program participants. Concern was most acute at the prekindergarten and kindergarten level. Several of our informants stated firmly not only that current early childhood testing practices are inadequate to measure and predict later functioning, but also that important aspects of children's development and competence simply cannot be tested. Several suggested, for example, that social and emotional development, task persistence, and attention span are critical for young children, but that they cannot be adequately assessed in school.

People in other LEAs posed their concerns slightly differently. There is consensus that the long-term objective of ECT I programs is to promote the acquisition of general school competence in early elementary years. The purpose of ECT I programs is seen as providing the necessary precursor skills to facilitate that development. There is, however, little agreement as to what those experiences ought to be. Hence, there is little agreement as to the areas a selection battery should cover.

Some informants were concerned with the technical quality of existing measures. Some worried that tests were not normed to local populations, others that

low test ceilings identified only children with major conceptual deficits. One reported that test scores tend to cluster, making it impossible to identify the most needy. "If you have more than half of your children scoring at a given level but room for only a few, how do you differentiate?" she asked.

Finally, many LEA staff reported that although they have been unable to find a selection test that does all they want it to, they are still working at finding or developing one. Many described their experience with various tests. Although some seemed somewhat discouraged about the likelihood of finding one that adequately meets all their needs, they have not given up. They repeatedly asked for technical assistance with this task.

6.6 Summary

Needs assessment, recruitment, and selection processes as required under Title I are complicated by features that characterize early childhood education generally. These include: the absence of normative criteria for defining educational disadvantage; lack of consensus on what constitutes educational disadvantage before school entry; lack of access to the local population of children potentially eligible for ECT I programs; and the primitive state of the art in measurement of early childhood. Most LEAs seem to be making a genuine effort to fulfill the intent of the law but are hampered by these problems. Strong interest was expressed in the need to find better ways to conduct needs assessment, recruitment, and selection. Our field data indicate that this is an area where USED guidance and technical assistance would be most helpful.

CHAPTER 7. ORGANIZING ECT I PROJECTS TO DELIVER SERVICE

7.1 Introduction

7.2 Physical Resources

7.2.1 Materials

7.2.2 Space

7.3 Human Resources

7.3.1 Teaching Staff

7.3.2 Support Services

7.3.3 Administrative Structures

7.3.4 Staff Training

7.4 Curriculum Development in ECT I Programs

7.4.1 Alternative Perspectives on Curriculum

7.4.2 Organic Nature of Program Activities

7.4.3 Impact of Evaluation Requirements on Curriculum

7.4.4 Use of Validated Models

7.4.5 Concluding Comments

7.5 Individualizing Programs Within ECT I Projects

7.6 Summary

7.1 Introduction

In looking at ECT I program practice within the broader context of early childhood education, a number of issues emerge about the internal structure and operation of such programs. In a very broad sense, these issues constitute the program curriculum, where curriculum is understood as all the planned activities designed for and delivered to each child. We organize our discussion in this chapter around three elements: resources (physical and human); program content; and methods of implementation. The physical resources include equipment and materials. In terms of human resources we examine the instructional personnel that interact with children, and those who support and supervise the instructional staff. Under program content we consider curriculum development in general. Finally, under implementation we discuss the organization of ECT I groups for instruction, and procedures for individualization of instruction.

7.2 Physical Resources

A conspicuous feature of early childhood programs is the purposeful interaction of play and learning activities. There is now abundant evidence that children learn through play. Theorists have described and analyzed the various types of play and their function in the growth and development of children (Piaget, 1960; Erikson, 1950; Smilansky, 1968; Bruner, et al., 1976). Early childhood practitioners have translated these findings into program practice. Often this is called open education. This approach assumes that teachers make decisions about curriculum pacing, sequencing, material, and setting, but that these are based on information generated by the child's interaction with his total classroom environment (Kohlberg, 1972; Kamii and deVries, 1977; Meisels,

et al., in press). These theories and practices have been central to the development of early childhood education generally and their influence is clearly felt in ECT I programs, particularly in the prekindergarten and kindergarten.

The type of material and play experience provided for children contributes greatly to what and how they learn. When these elements are carefully chosen to match the strengths, abilities, and interests of the children concerned, they have the potential to generate and transmit information and to develop new understanding. They facilitate the process of learning as well as providing its content, and they enable children to engage their curiosity and use their initiative as they learn. The materials and learning situations should also yield valuable diagnostic information about what individual children know, what they are interested in, how they organize information and experiences, and where they need help.

7.2.1 Materials. In visiting ECT I classrooms, our site staff noted the types of material available and the ways in which they were arranged and made accessible to children. Almost without exception, the ECT I programs were very well equipped with a variety of materials and instruction aids. A description of one self-contained kindergarten class gives a sense of the richness of the environment.

> The classroom was full of materials -- alphabets and letters all over the walls; plants and a little terrarium with lizards. They were also doing a bean-sprouting experiment. There were a number of homemade instructional materials, a lot of which the teacher had obviously made hereself. There was plenty of clay, lots of paints and colors. Throughout the classroom there was just a real richness of materials -- thermometers, books -- you name it!

Material was of two major types: equipment for exploration and free play (e.g., art materials, puzzles, or sorting games), and structured learning material (e.g., Peabody Language Kits). In prekindergarten and kindergarten classes, most material was of the first type. First-grade classes usually used more structured material. While first grades usually had some free play material, there was not as much of it and its use was often restricted to "spare time after work was finished."

This marked shift in emphasis from kindergarten to first grade reflects a change from an individual educational approach to one with common objectives to be shared by all children. It revealed some theoretical ambiguities about what children should be doing and raised important pedagogic issues. From a perspective that stresses program content and short-term achievement, it was entirely appropriate. From a more cognitive developmental position emphasizing long-term effects, many would argue that children with educational deficits in the first grade are in most need of concrete experiences with a variety of material and play situations. Under current arrangements, however, these children are often the least likely to get them. Because they are least likely to complete the required symbolic tasks, they may seldom have opportunities for more concrete exploration.

Exploratory Play Materials. In prekindergarten and kindergarten these were usually arranged in interest areas where children worked in self-directed tasks. Most classes had areas for some or all of the following activities: housekeeping and doll play, dress-up and make-believe, block play, art, science or nature, climbing, riding (tricycles, trucks), water or sand play, woodworking, pre-academic play (puzzles, counting games, and the like), and reading.

A typical housekeeping area might include a small stove, a refrigerator and a sink as well as make-believe foods, pots, pans, dishes, brooms, toasters, telephones, and the like. Dolls, a doll bed, and a carriage were often nearby. An adjacent area for dramatic play might contain hats, purses, neckties, shoes, scarves, and other grownup clothing. This was sometimes arranged in "prop boxes" according to function (e.g., "doctor's box" or "plumber's box"). Children used these props in make-believe and role play. They put together and acted out what they knew about the people and events they had experienced.

For example, we watched three kindergarten children dress up as a family and do the weekly shopping: father, mother, and child. One was adorned in a necktie and an old straw hat. He wore a large pair of men's shoes and an oversized suit coat. His "wife" had a large purse, a lacy shawl, and magnificent high-heeled shoes. Talking animatedly, the "father" pushed the "baby" to the "store" in a carriage. When they reached the store (an adjacent book shelf stacked with empty boxes and cans labeled by price), they discussed the items available and made their selections. Mother reached into her purse for some make-believe cash and paid an imaginary cashier. The family returned home. Then, while mother comforted and fed the baby, father put the groceries away, carefully sorting them into like kinds. "The big boxes go here; the little ones over there."

When they appeared to be finished, the teacher joined them. They talked about their play and she helped them to read the labels on the products they had "bought." Together they found letters that looked alike, related them to letters and sounds in their own name, and started a list for the next shopping trip. Then, interest beginning to wane, they all moved on to other activities.

What did the children learn from all this? It is hard to specify all of the separate skills or their interactions. However, it is clear that the children experimented with adult roles; they read the labels on the many food containers by comparing words with pictures; they considered alternative products and made choices among them; they organized materials along a logical dimension; and they acknowledged, discussed, and found a way to share responsibility for several tasks.

The relevance of this play to some of the general program objectives was apparent. An analysis by relevant area might be as follows:

Personal/social growth

Children showed evidence of:

- Increased ability to express feelings
- Increased independence and self-confidence
- Sustained involvement in activities
- A positive self-image
- Ability to make and maintain friends
- Increased positive interaction with peers
- Increased skill in group activities
- Increased awareness of the roles of others

Gross motor

Children showed evidence of:

- Ability to use basic motor skills to push and control the carriage
- Ability to dress and undress, including buttoning and tying skills
- Ability to use a pencil successfully

Perceptual motor

Children showed evidence of:

- Ability to relate words to pictures
- Ability to write letters and short words

Cognitive

Children showed evidence of:

- Ability to match and classify

- Awareness of the relationship between concrete objects and written symbols
- Ability to organize and arrange objects by function
- Understanding of the concept of exchange of goods and money
- Ability to recognize letters and familiar words in written form
- Ability to recognize numerals in written form

Language

Children showed evidence of:

- Ability to understand the language of others
- Ability to use language to structure personal interactions

We cite this example because it typifies the kind of activities we found in ECT I prekindergarten and kindergarten programs and the complex functions they serve. Unlike specific skill instruction, the relationship between a particular activity and a discrete outcome is not always clear. Taken together, however, a number of similar experiences contribute to the child's total understanding of himself and his environment and move him toward readiness for more specific academic tasks.

The contents of other play areas varied greatly; the number of possible items is endless. Table 7.1 includes examples of typical prekindergarten or kindergarten material.

The reading area was usually a small library of picture books and storybooks. Often tucked into a quiet corner of the room, it might contain a rug, soft pillows, and perhaps a small chair or two. We saw children looking at books alone or in pairs. We also saw teachers reading stories to the class or to small groups of children. On the walls and space dividers were pictures with labels or stories to describe them. For example, one featured an array of houses. The caption over it said,

"This is where I live."

Each house featured a child's name and address. The teacher said that the

Table 7.1

Material Typically Found
in Prekindergarten and Kindergarten Classrooms

Block Area:	large cardboard "bricks" (approximately 8" x 8" x 10")
	large hollow wooden blocks (up to 3' long)
	medium-sized wooden blocks of various shapes
	"home-made" blocks of contact-paper -- covered boxes or Styrofoam
	boards and ramps
	string, rope, and pulleys
	trucks, cars, and other vehicles
	traffic signs
	model people and animals
Art Area:	paint, crayons, chalk
	finger paint
	clay or plasticine and accessories for using it (rolling pins, cookie cutters)
	scissors
	paper of various colors, sizes, and textures
	sponges, paintbrushes, tooth brushes, and other material for painting
	glue, paste, scotch tape, clips, and other material for putting things together
	bits of wood and balsa
	scraps of material of various colors and textures
	egg cartons, cotton balls, toothpicks, pipe cleaners, thread, braid, colored ribbon
Science or Nature:	stones and shells
	magnifying glasses
	scales and balances
	thermometers
	rulers
	magnets
	plants and seeds
	pictures and models of animals
	an aquarium and a terrarium
	an animal (a gerbil, a mouse, a guinea pig, a bird, or a snake)

Table 7.1 continued

Gross Motor: (climbing and riding)	a small jungle gym or climbing dome large trucks and fire engines tricycles and wagons balance beam inner tubes balls, bean bags, and other things to throw through hoops
Water Play and Sand Play:	a water table a sand box funnels and strainers pans, dishes, silverware plastic bottles tubing measuring cups and spoons
Woodworking:	a workbench hammers, saw, files screwdrivers wood, heavy cardboard, or plasterboard logs nails, screws, nuts, bolts, washers hand drill sandpaper
Pre-academic Play:	puzzles counting games matching games pegboards nesting games large and small beads and strings design blocks parquetry blocks attribute blocks Lego blocks Tinker toys dominoes sewing boards abacus Cuisinaire Rods rulers Montessori sensorial materials Montessori cylinders paper and pencils pattern letters or numerals

next thing she planned to do was place the houses on a large map. In the meantime, she used them to identify children's names, point out initial letters, and compare the length and structural features of words. In other classes, reading areas were decorated with pictures and experience charts, such as, "This is me and my dog. We are playing ball."

Structured Learning Materials. These provide activities in particular content areas. Their purpose is to teach specific skills. Many were commercially prepared and marketed. Others, as suggested above, were locally developed, either at the classroom level or through the central administrative office.

It would have been impossible to inventory classes as we visited them. However, we did make note of the commercial materials most often found. This list -- by no means complete -- is presented in Table 7.2.

In addition to published material, several larger LEAs have devoted Title I resources to designing teaching material of their own. For example, the reading consultant in Mobile, Alabama, has developed units on reading and reading readiness. These include instructional activities for the child and are designed in a programmed-learning mode. A pretest and posttest are included as part of each curriculum module. Similar efforts were found in several other large LEAs.

Most of the instruction materials fall into one of the following areas: reading, language, mathematics, cognitive functioning, and perceptual motor growth. Their prominence, particularly in the Title I classrooms, is conspicuous and suggests at least two things. First, these areas are important programmatically, and direct instruction is being provided in them. Second, teachers seem to value some structure to help organize their work. The materials

Table 7.2

Examples of Curriculum Materials
Found in Early Childhood Title I Programs

Basic Reading
Lippincott Company
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Basic Reading Program
Southwest Regional Laboratory
for Educational Research and
Development (SWRL)
Ginn and Company
Lexington, Massachusetts

DISTAR
Science Research Associates, Inc.
Chicago, Illinois

Early-to-Read Program
Initial Teaching Alphabet
Publications, Inc.
New York, New York

The Holt Basic Reading System
Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.
New York, New York

Houghton Mifflin Reading Series
Houghton Mifflin Company
Boston, Massachusetts

Instructional Concepts Program
Southwest Regional Laboratory
for Educational Research and
Development (SWRL)
Ginn and Company
Lexington, Massachusetts

Keys to Reading
The Economy Company
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

The Laidlaw Reading Program
Laidlaw Brothers, Publishers
River Forest, Illinois

The Macmillan Reading Program
The Macmillan Company
New York, New York

Oral Language Program
Southwestern Cooperative Educational
Laboratory, Inc. (SWCEL)
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Palo Alto Reading Program:
Sequential Steps in Reading
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.
New York, New York

Peabody Language Development Kits
American Guidance Service, Inc.
Circle Pines, Minnesota

Phonetic Keys to Reading
The Economy Company
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Portage Project Learning Materials
Portage Project
Portage, Wisconsin

Pre-Reading Skills (PRS)
Encyclopaedia Britannica Educational
Corporation
Chicago, Illinois

Santa Clara Plus
Richard L. Zweig Associates, Inc.
Huntington Beach, California

Scott, Foresman Reading Systems
Scott, Foresman and Company
Glenview, Illinois

Jo Stanchfield's Basic Reading Skills
Support Program
Bowmar Publishing Corporation
Glendale, California

Stepping Stones to Reading
New Century
New York, New York

assure that children take the necessary steps to acquire specific skills. While teachers can and must be creative in choosing what concepts and skills to emphasize, suggestions, ideas, and specific activities are usually welcome and make teaching easier.

On the other hand, the multiplicity of material in most classrooms, as well as the variety among classrooms, suggests that no single system is sufficient. Teachers said repeatedly, "We really need material specifically relevant to our kids." This suggests a concern for matching appropriate material to each child. At the same time, different materials seem to be used sometimes simply because of teachers' preference. In some cases, the fact that teachers had used certain materials in the past and were comfortable with them seemed to motivate the choice.

7.2.2 Space. A growing literature documents the effects that space and its use have on children's behavior (Kritchevsky, Prescott and Walling, 1969; Brush, 1977; Prescott and David, 1976; Olds, in press). Early childhood educators have devoted considerable thought to the arrangement of classroom space (Meisels, 1977; Hohmann, et al., 1976), and it is clear that room arrangement reflects the educational beliefs of the adults responsible for the classroom and suggests the types of experiences and instruction children will receive. We therefore looked at the space available, the way it was arranged, and the activities encouraged in it.

Availability. We found space to be a sensitive issue in several LEAs. It is generally in short supply, with many activities competing for it. In some LEAs the shortage was attributed to desegregation rulings precluding the construction of new facilities. In these sites all new programs must be implemented within existing space. As the director of federal programs in one large

city said, "There's no problem of thinking of new projects or new things to do. The problem is finding a place to put them." In general, there just is not much space available. Even where school populations are declining, the recent proliferation of new programs, all requiring classroom resources, has kept demand for school space high. With declining enrollments and the severe press on local budgets, there has been little new construction and it is unlikely that this condition will change in the immediate future.

Even when space was adequate for ECT I programs, it was often far from luxurious. None of the LEAs we visited had constructed special areas to accommodate the programs. In a few cases, new facilities had been built to house regular district programs, and the vacated space was turned over to special programs such as ECT I. Usually, however, this space was not designed for use by young children, and the ECT I programs just had to make do. For example, in a few LEAs, a school building became vacant and was used to house ECT I prekindergarten and kindergarten classes for the entire district. This central facility enabled all program participants (children, parents, and staff) to become familiar with one another, to share goals, and to develop a sense of program identity. On the other hand, the central location precluded neighborhood schools, necessitated transporting children from home to school and back, made frequent, informal contact between home and school difficult, and potentially impaired communication and continuity between the early childhood projects and activities in later grades.

In short, restrictions on building, constraints on local school spending, and a general lower priority for ECT I programs combined to make the available space less than optimal. We visited several LEAs in which early childhood programs were tucked away on a "space available" basis. In one site, for example,

a class was held on the stage of an auditorium. In several others, classes were held in conference rooms, former storage space, or other areas more appropriate for small groups of less active children. In at least two communities, prekindergarten classes were housed in facilities rented from local churches that were used for church activities over the weekend, so that teachers had to rearrange materials every week.

Space Organization. The arrangement of space indicated the types of activity and instruction likely to occur in each class. Again, a distinction can be made between grades. Most prekindergarten and kindergarten classrooms were arranged into three types of area: a group meeting place, interest areas, and areas for solitary play. The meeting place was big enough to accommodate the whole group. Often the day's activities began and ended there. It was usually set off in some way, sometimes by an area rug, sometimes by low dividers such as bookshelves. There was often a focal point -- a piano bench, a large teacher's chair, or the like. Children and teachers gathered there to plan activities, for specific instruction, or to recall and review previous events. It was also the area that teachers used when children became overexcited and needed to be reminded of rules and responsibilities.

Once the first teaching activity had been completed (this often was a letter or word recognition game, a counting activity, a calendar, weather, season, or holiday "lesson"), children divided into groups and moved into interest areas. In some of these (e.g., the block area), activities were largely unstructured and child-directed. Other areas (e.g., the art area or the pre-academic area) might have an aide or a parent assigned to facilitate activities or track a specific skill. We watched brief "lessons" in the use of scissors, pencils, or crayons, in color or shape recognition, size dis-

tinction, counting, and patterning. Meanwhile, the teacher might use the meeting space as an instruction area for a lesson with one child or a group of children. In some classes, children were grouped according to ability and the groups were instructed separately. Prepared teaching material (e.g., the Distar language laboratory) often provided the focus for these sessions. Groups took turns for instruction. When one finished, it was dismissed for informal work in interest areas and another took its place.

Private spaces are perhaps a unique feature of early childhood environments. These are predicated on the belief that young children occasionally need to remove themselves from the tumultuous activity that often characterizes group play at this age. The private space may be nothing more than a corner of the room marked off by a small rug, or it may be an elaborately constructed hiding area made of packing boxes, climbing equipment, or the like. Children sometimes used this space as an independent area for work. Other times, a child might withdraw there and watch the flow of activity as it went on around him. On the other hand, few prekindergarten or kindergartens provided individual desks or assigned private spaces. Other than coat storage areas ("cubbies"), all space and material belonged to the group.

7.3 Human Resources

The adult role in ECT I programs differed from program to program as well as from grade to grade. Looking first at the classroom, we describe the roles of teachers, aides, and special service personnel. Next we briefly discuss the support services available and shifts we anticipate in this area. Then we consider the types of administrative structure we observed, particularly as they relate to program practice. We conclude with a discussion of LEA activities directed at technical support for staff.

7.3.1 Teaching staff. Depending upon the structure of the program, a number of people might be available at the classroom level. These include teachers, aides, resource personnel, and special-subject teachers.

Teachers. The critical adult in each classroom was always the teacher. Not unexpectedly, most of the teachers were women, as they are in most early childhood programs. However, we did visit several classes whose teachers were men, and several others with male aides. Some program directors reported that they would like to see more men in these roles and sought male applicants, but that few apply.

All classroom teachers were trained in early childhood or elementary school education. Most had at least a bachelor's degree in education or a related field, although one outstanding program that had emerged from a community action program was still working toward that goal. However, at least at the prekindergarten level, not all of the teachers were certified. While we did not deliberately seek information on certification, some issues came up on their own. Cost implications were the most obvious: the salaries of non-certified teachers are lower than those of certified teachers, thus reducing the cost of prekindergarten programs.

In most LEAs, ECT I teachers were trained in early childhood education. In a few, teachers had simply extended their interest in elementary education to the prekindergarten and kindergarten years. Moreover, some teachers had been reassigned to ECT I programs because of declining school populations and the subsequent cutbacks in classes at other grade levels. To the extent that elementary and early childhood education emphasize different aspects of the learner and the learning process, the question arises whether these shifts are appropriate.

In contrast to classroom or center-based programs, few home visit programs used professional teachers. With only one exception among the programs we visited, home teachers were paraprofessionals trained within the ECT I project. Often, although not always, they were members of the racial and linguistic population they served and lived in that community. Paraprofessional home visit staffs were supervised by a professional staff member, although there were differences in the disciplines represented. Several supervisors were educators, one a nurse, one a social worker, and several others did not make their professional background clear. The lack of homogeneity in the training and experience of both the supervisory and home visit personnel was quite striking.

Finally, we were struck by the amount of professional interest and mobility of many of the ECT I teachers we visited. Beyond in-service training provided by the program, many are also enrolled in professional courses at nearby colleges and universities. Not all of these deal with program content. Many teachers are taking courses in evaluation, tests and measurement, and diagnostic testing. Their interest is reflected in what they do in class. Several teachers showed us material and activities they had developed in their course work. Others spoke of understanding more about what test results meant and being better able to use measurement to assess children's progress.

Teachers' responsibilities were many and diverse. In self-contained classes (prekindergarten and most kindergartens) they included planning and implementing the overall program for the class, analyzing whatever data (test scores) were available on all children, planning and implementing specific programs for each, organizing the room, ordering and caring for materials, initiating and participating in parent conferences, workshops and meetings,

supervising the work of aides and/or student teachers, and keeping track of a myriad of administrative details. Many teachers also administered tests for program evaluation. In almost every Title I prekindergarten and kindergarten class, teachers had at least a part-time aide; many had full time aides.

Aides. In some classes, teacher and aide worked together as colleagues. In several sites it was difficult to tell who was teacher and who was aide. Both gave instruction, both were aware of goals for individual children, and both worked consistently toward them. They also shared the administrative and maintenance tasks. For example, in one site, while the aide instructed one group in a DISTAR reading lesson, the teacher checked the individual work of others. Later the teacher taught a second group and the aide cleaned up.

In other LEAs the distinction between teachers and aides was very clear. The teacher took almost exclusive responsibility for the instruction program. She introduced all new work and usually led all group activities. The aide might help individual children having difficulty in completing assignments, check finished papers, supervise free play or lunch periods, and do general classroom maintenance chores. In still others, the aide's job was largely clerical. She maintained bus schedules, kept child achievement profiles up to date, collected certificates of dental examinations, and the like.

The role of aides in ECT I programs may be reduced as the competition for funds becomes more pronounced. In several of the sites we visited, fewer aides were available last year than the year before, and further reductions are anticipated for fiscal year 1978. In these sites, teachers who formerly had full-time aides now have to share them. Teachers and aides were all disturbed by these reductions. Teachers insisted that they would be unable to do their jobs adequately without more help. Aides felt pulled in too many direc-

tions. They felt they could never really get to know the children or understand the teacher's expectations if they were serving several classrooms.

It is worth noting that the LEAs in which aide services have been or may be cut back were those in which aides had primarily clerical and maintenance tasks. In sites where they were intrinsic to the instruction program, there was no talk of curtailment. It is tempting to speculate that in the former case they are considered expendable extras while in the latter they are essential -- and inexpensive.

Resource Personnel. Not all of the ECT I programs we visited were in self-contained classes. Projects in first grade and occasionally in kindergarten sometimes offered more limited services. In these programs, instructional specialists worked with children for short periods on specific skills. Teaching sessions occurred either within the classroom[1] or in a separate resource center or "laboratory." Teachers worked with children either individually or in small groups. Most of the groups included four to five children, although several were as small as two; and one included ten children.

The resource teachers introduce a new role into the educational climate of the ECT I programs. As the title implies, these teachers have special qualifications in one or more substantive areas. They are usually specialists in reading, mathematics, or early childhood education. Some, indeed, had had extensive training in their area. Others were less clearly qualified; many had been classroom teachers in the past and been selected on that basis without any special training.

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[1] Title I specialists were designated differently in the various projects. In addition to "specialists," we found them called "floating teachers," "visiting teachers" and "traveling teachers." Essentially they worked in much the same ways.

The degree to which the supplementary program was integrated into the child's educational experience varied greatly. On one hand, we visited programs where specialist and classroom teacher worked closely together to diagnose each child's needs and to coordinate the ways in which each could best help meet them. The classroom teacher might plan classroom activities around one or more topics, incorporating opportunities to meet and master specific skills such as new vocabulary words, recognition of various marks of punctuation, understanding of phonetic rules, etc. The reading specialist would them organize her activities so that those skills were reinforced for children needing extra help. She might do so with different materials stressing the same skills, or she might use a similar theme, going back over concepts and skills that the child seemed not to have mastered.

At the other extreme, we observed a few cases in which the Title I special program seemed only distantly related to the child's regular education. Classroom teacher and specialists had little time to plan, scheduling of sessions with the resource teacher often conflicted with important classroom activities, and even the teaching materials and methods seemed to conflict. A striking example of this inconsistency occurred in one system where the district program (the child's classroom experience) taught reading by means of a structured phonetic appraoch, whereas the Title I program used a language experience approach. The motivation for the dichotomy was to avoid the possibility of compliance violations. Its effect, however, was that children had to make a cognitive shift in their approach to written material each time they changed classes. Several teachers and program directors were concerned about this. As one said, "these are the children who most need continuity in teaching and consistency in materials." Another stressed the importance of continuity in

the very early stages of learning, pointing out that although differences in approach might be better tolerated later, for beginning learners they were often very difficult.

7.3.2 Support Services. We observed a number of support services available to ECT I programs. These included nurses, speech therapists, dental hygenists, psychologists, nutritionists, community liaison personnel, social workers, and parent education coordinators. The consensus of program personnel was that such support was essential in providing a full range of services for ECT I eligible children. There was also general concern that these services are being and will continue to be cut back.

7.3.3 Administrative Structures. A review of studies of program effectiveness (see for example White, et al., 1973, and Weikart, 1971) suggests some administrative variables that contribute to effective program practice. These include the skill and administrative style of the project director, in-service staff training, and adequate resources for technical support.

The Project Director. In every LEA, there was someone specifically responsible for program implementation. The tasks of this role include: coordinating instruction activities, procuring materials and space, hiring and training staff, assuring quality control, maintaining esprit de corps among program personnel, and establishing and maintaining harmonious relationships with parents and the community. The ECT I program directors we visited had various administrative styles and maintained project cohesiveness in different ways.

Some had proprietary feelings about the program. In several of the programs we visited, the director had also been the initiator and retained a sense of purpose for the program -- characterized by intense enthusiasm and

dedication, which was often reflected in the commitment of the rest of the staff. These directors usually knew the project to the finest detail of classroom practice. It was not unusual, for example, to see them greet children or parents by name, recall a particular need of some child, or ask a teacher about a current issue or problem in classroom management. Nor was it unusual for them to pitch in and help with classroom activities.

Other directors stressed facilitating communication among staff. For example, in one multicenter program, the director spent a few minutes at the end of each observation talking with the teaching staff about what she had observed. They, in turn, had a number of questions for her. Our presence was not allowed to interfere with their exchange of ideas. Teachers in this project spoke of the importance of the director's availability and of the clear standards she set and maintained. Staff had considerable latitude in choosing material and in the way they used it as long as it was consistent with the program theory.

A third administrative strategy emphasized standardizing practice. One director said:

> I stress the need for standardization. All teachers must use the same materials (DISTAR Reading Program). A lot of them didn't like the idea at first, but they see it my way now.

In these programs, we noted that the director visited classrooms as a supervisor rather than a colleague. We were told that at the end of the year, posttest scores were used not only to evaluate children's achievement, but to assess teacher competence.

Finally, some LEA administrators were responsible for a number of programs, often not limited to the early childhood areas. In some sites, for example, the director of ECT I was also the director of all other Title I programs; in

others, the role included direction of all other federal programs or all other compensatory education programs. In these LEAs, the director took a more distant role, often relying on assistants (specialists in early childhood education or evaluation) to oversee the ECT I program.

7.3.4 Staff Training. This was not one of the topics of interest to us as we began the field research, but it was raised often by LEA personnel. It clearly was a very important concern locally and teachers and administrators took it seriously. This may have been because many of the ECT I programs are relatively new. The staff are therefore rather introspective about what they are doing and how they might do it better. They also seem to need support and reassurance as well as substantive information. In-service programs were reported to contribute immensely to the sense of solidarity of the program as well as to the functional competence of the teaching personnel.

In some projects, teachers and aides met separately for training. In others, they worked together. In many, all participants were encouraged to share responsibility for preparing materials and raising issues for discussion with their colleagues. Others used a more didactic approach, relying upon subject specialists or outside consultants for information. Most used a combination of the two strategies. The content of in-service training varied from program to program, but topics frequently addressed were aspects of child development (particularly affective or social development and language development), teaching techniques as they relate to specific skill areas (usually reading readiness), diagnostic/prescriptive skills, test interpretation, and ways to increase parent involvement. Interestingly, teacher priorities for in-service training topics did not always coincide with program priorities.

In addition to substantive input, various LEAs stressed other functions of in-service training. Co-directors in one large LEA saw it as a problem-solving activity and a chance to incorporate teachers' ideas in program curricula. Another director stressed the acquisition of new ideas and opportunities for self-motivated changes in teacher behavior. Finally, a number emphasized the establishment of mutual understanding and support among ECT I staff.

External Technical Support. Another theme that recurred was the need of LEA staff for external support. Several sites we visited had established working relationships with nearby colleges and universities. They relied upon them to help develop curricula and measurement tests, to design and conduct evaluations, to contribute to in-service training, and for library resources and professional growth. One kindergarten teacher, for example, was enrolled in a master's degree program. She was planning a longitudinal study of Title I preschool graduates as a thesis. Her instructors served as resource personnel for the ECT I program. In other sites, SEA consultants were used as resources. Their visits were a source of information and ideas, not just a required procedure.

Unfortunately, in many LEAs, ECT I staff received little external support. They functioned independently, often isolated from colleagues by distance, interests, and administrative structure. This issue is discussed in more detail in chapter 8.

7.4 Curriculum Development in ECT I programs

In discussing this issue, we must distinguish between Title I programs that are adjuncts to regular school programs (first grades and some kindergartens) and those constituting the whole district effort at that level (prekindergartens and some kindergartens). The former take their goals and objec-

tives from corresponding regular school activities, simply extending the instructional services to children who are having difficulty with the regular school curriculum or are progressing more slowly than their peers. New programs, on the other hand, must develop an entire curriculum. This raises a variety of issues.

7.4.1 Alternative Perspectives on Curriculum. Many LEAs are striving to define what they do in terms of a comprehensive set of behavioral objectives, often within a criterion-referenced curriculum. They usually organize these objectives in a developmental sequence, sometimes also specifying age, grade, or development level expectations. There is some question, however, about the criteria for the selection and placement of items. Some were drawn from tests but without critical examination of the reasons for choosing them or of the norms used. Most of the tests had face validity only. Program and evaluation staff members in several LEAs spoke of the need to examine the tests for reliability and validity, but they did not give it a high priority. In fairness, there were often not extra resources to pursue it.

The organization of objectives differs from place to place. Some LEAs use a skill area organization while others use subject matter topics. A typical skill area organization would focus on some or all of the following:

- the way the child perceives the world (auditory and visual perception)
- the way the child controls his body and integrates the information from his senses (gross motor skills, fine motor skills, perceptual motor integration, perceptual motor skills, psycho-motor skills)
- cognitive status (conceptual development and problem-solving skills)
- capacity to organize behavior and maintain attention (attention span, task initiation, task directedness, independence, and executive ability)
- language ability (both expressive language and comprehension), and

- social and emotional integrity (self-concept and relationships with others)

A subject matter organization might focus on features of reading or reading readiness (e.g., letter recognition, word decoding skills, or vocabulary development), language arts (integration of reading, writing, and spelling), and mathematics (e.g., number recognition, simple arithmetic operations, and shape and spatial relationships).

Closer examination shows that the lists of objectives in these two types of organization overlap a good deal. The apparent difference is one of perspective. For elementary school programs it is logical to extend downward the subject matter structure developed in the later grades. Some argue that this is essential if programs are to meet ECT I requirements that they be skill-oriented. People trained in early childhood education, however, tend to reject this approach as inappropriate and focus more on the basic developmental areas mentioned above. Thus, while the objectives have a lot in common, there is a difference in how they are perceived and related to the process of instruction.

7.4.2 Organic Nature of Program Activities. Although program curricula may specify objectives and activities in discrete content or skill areas, prekindergarten and kindergarten personnel particularly stressed the interactive nature of learning, particularly for young children. As one project director said,

> You cannot rely on lists. You can't even set priorities on content. It all happens together. If a teacher is working on reading with a child, she may have to work first on getting his attention. She may take his face in her hand and say 'Stop, now, and look at me.' Then she can get on with the reading. But she may have to come back to the attention issue again and again in a number of different ways. Now, what is she really teaching?

The point is important. Although many ECT I programs have developed sets of behavioral objectives, often in the form of criterion-referenced curricula, these do not usually translate into segmented instruction. For example, the typical preschool day is not divided into periods for cognition, psychomotor skills, social development. It does not even have specific content periods, as do academic schedules for grades two through twelve; instruction is viewed as a more holistic entity. Furthermore, the experiences of individual children within the program may vary substantially, reflecting their diverse needs and interests. As a result, objectives have a fundamentally different meaning in early childhood programs than in later grades. They tend not to emerge naturally out of instruction but to be arbitrarily imposed in the interests of accountability and of providing standards for evaluation. While there are exceptions, this situation appears to predominate.

7.4.3 Impact of Evaluation Requirements on Curriculum. One of the ways in which program personnel have begun to develop curricula is to look at available tests to see what they measure, and then to develop a curriculum around them in order to assure positive outcomes. For example, a teacher in one landlocked state had developed a whole unit on submarines for a kindergarten class. When we asked why, she said that a number of her students in the previous year had failed an item on submarines on their posttest and she wanted to be sure it didn't happen this year.

The evaluation requirement of Title I clearly can exert a great deal of influence on program practice. The example above is particularly distressing, given the poor quality of early childhood tests and the limited areas they assess. More generally, the fact that most ECT I programs are evaluated annually requires that they show immediate measureable progress. This, of

course, runs counter to the long-term developmental logic of many early childhood theories (see chapter 5).

7.4.4 Use of Validated Models. Nevertheless, our data indicate that there is a strong interest among program and evaluation personnel in having a written curriculum. Many programs, even at the prekindergarten level, have developed their own or are doing so. In addition to behavioral objectives, these often suggest appropriate activities and even materials helpful in reaching those objectives. Some programs have tied these efforts to curriculum content at the upper grades, generally extending downward the skills specified in the LEA district curriculum; others have turned to tests. In several programs, for example, LEA personnel reported that classroom activities were developed around the concepts measured by their screening or their pretest. Several test manuals give instructions to facilitate this. In other programs, staff have used a more eclectic approach, borrowing ideas from other programs, from published items such as textbooks and programmed learning materials (cf. Table 7.2), and from the clinical experience and priorities of their staff. We were struck, however, with the fact that despite extensive recent efforts to develop and disseminate curriculum models[2], we saw few sites in which programs had been adopted in toto. Instead, program personnel seemed to borrow selectively from other programs and to adapt their various components to local needs.

Staff at some LEAs reported that they had looked at a number of curricula, screening tests, and developmental profiles before deciding what they thought would work in their community. For example, early childhood staff in one LEA

[2]See, for example, Hawkridge, et al., 1968, USED's Education Programs That Work, and the various Head Start Planned Variation Models.

said that they used the validated early childhood programs at Waterloo, Iowa, as a precedent, but added that they had modified their program considerably in the several years of implementing it. Similarly, home visit programs in two Connecticut LEAs drew their initial content and teaching strategy from the Verbal Interaction Program (Levenstein, 1971) and from the toy lending library at the Far West Laboratories (Nimnicht, et al., 1969), but had modified the curriculum content and sequence substantially.

These reports of borrowing but not replicating are consistent with that of McLaughlin (1975) about the AIR study of Exemplary Programs for the Education of the Disadvantaged Children (Hawkridge, 1968):

> A major source of disappointment at the federal level has been the lack of interest by SEAs and LEAs in the study findings. Publication of the 'It Works' series did not result in a marked upsurge of 'Project Concerns' or 'Project Early Starts' throughout the country or even of a substantial number of inquiries. (p. 84)

She pointed out that little effort had been made to disseminate information about these programs and speculated that, even had such efforts been made, the factors affecting curriculum decisions would have precluded adopting the complete model of other communities. Our data also raise questions about the usefulness of identifying exemplary programs for the purpose of replication or adoption. What may be more useful is information about individual program components and opportunities to talk with persons implementing similar programs, the concept embodied by the National Dissemination Network.

Curriculum development typically seems to proceed thus. Project staff come together to develop a program content. Drawing heavily on their own experience and in some degree on material they have read and people they have talked with, they articulate a set of expectations of children at the appropriate age and hence the goals areas for the project. Following from this,

specific activities and often a criterion-referenced test may be developed. While information on validated projects may play a role, it is often informal and diffuse.

Of course, this is not always true. Section eight describes one outstanding exception. In this case, a prekindergarten parent-child program was adopted almost completely after a thorough number of communications and even a small pilot effort. But more often curricula took shape less systematically, starting perhaps with material developed elsewhere and bending to meet local needs and interests. As with a soup or stew, LEA may use similar ingredients in the making but vary the proportions to suit their tastes.

7.4.5 Concluding Comments. We again return to the two themes that are interwoven throughout this report and are critical to understanding curriculum development in ECT I programs. First, we have the weak and uncertain link between early childhood experience and competent functioning in school. This simply is not well understood. On the other hand, given the general Title I focus on the development of basic skills and on accountability, there is an increased push toward molding ECT I curricula in this direction. The face valid way of doing this is to impose subject area objectives on ECT I programs. This, of course, runs counter to much current developmental theory about what is appropriate in early childhood. However, because the links cannot be specified precisely, and because they are conceived in a long-term, multi-grade framework, the clinical wisdom often lacks support from empirical evidence. This can result in the superposition of various theories on one another, often without consideration for the adequacy of the fit. Hence, the program becomes a collection of bits and pieces of early childhood practice with no coherent structure to tie the ideas and practice together.

This dilemma is most readily apparent in the difference between the formal descriptions (written documents and Title I applications) and informal accounts (teacher comments and our field staff observations) of programs. The former usually emphasize specific achievement-related objectives, whereas the programs as implemented often reflect more comprehensive concerns.

7.5 Individualizing Programs Within ECT I Projects

A conspicuous feature of a great many ECT I programs visited was staff awareness of and sensitivity to issues of individualization. In most sites staff spoke with feeling of the unique characteristics of individual children and of the need to relate experiences directly to them. However, putting this into practice was difficult.

At one extreme was a small group of programs that used elaborate procedures borrowed from special education and the diagnostic/prescriptive models developed there (Gallager, 1974; Meisels, 1977). These involved a multi-step process, including in-depth and often multi-disciplinary evaluations of each child's strengths and weaknesses, a written diagnosis of educational need, and an individual education plan drawn from different subsets of the project's general program objectives. The process is designed to make maximal use of the child's skills, abilities, and interests in order to improve performance in each area of deficit, conditional upon the child's capability. Each individual education plan (IEP) is carried out by selecting activities consistent with the child' cognitive style and interests. Finally, the child is reassessed regularly and the IEP reviewed to evaluate progress toward objectives and to consider possible changes in the plan.

We visited several projects that aspired to this level of individuali-

zation, and at least one that seemed to approach it. That project is a preschool effort using the diagnostic/prescriptive procedures developed by the Early Recognition and Intervention Network (Project ERIN) of Hainsworth and Hainsworth (1975). It is a longitudinal preventive program involving four steps: planning, screening, follow-up, and an education plan for every child.

The program uses a Preschool Screening Test System consisting of a screening test for the child and an in-depth questionnaire for the parents. The test assesses competence in areas of language, gross and fine motor skill, cognitive functioning and hearing, vision, and medical integrity. The questionnaire taps information on the child's behavioral characteristics and his developmental and medical history. Initial screening is followed by classroom diagnosis including further tests and observations. Individual Developmental Learning Profiles are developed on every child, and appropriate programs are planned and carried out by teacher and specialist. At mid-year, and again at the end of the academic year, all plans are reviewed and the total classroom program restructured as needed.

A more typical method of individualization is to develop a skill profile on each child, usually based upon the scores from selection or evaluation pretests. These may be commercially available tests such as the Boehm Test of Basic Concepts, the Caldwell Cooperative Preschool Inventory, the McCarthy Scales of Children's Abilities, or a criterion-referenced test tied to a locally developed project curriculum. (See chapters 4 and 6 for discussion of selection of tests and evaluation instruments.) The profile indicates skill mastery levels in areas assessed by the particular test. Teachers use it to monitor the child's progress in these areas, checking off new skills as they are acquired. Clearly the scope of such individualization is limited to

what the test used happens to tap. In particular, no assessment is made of the child's individual interests or learning style. Developing the program for the child is based only upon what he can and cannot do and using the standard available resources.

In a few programs individualization was present mainly in form rather than substance. While teachers filled out individual profiles and goals sheets, there was little relationship between these and the program as implemented in the classroom.

In fairness, it should be pointed out that individualization is a very difficult task for several reasons. First, there is limited technology for diagnostic assessment and for linking its results to classroom instruction. This constrains the whole effort. Even in the few places where we observed a sophisticated form of individualization, it was based on essentially new methods such as Project ERIN. Second, the process involves access to special support services personnel. While in some LEAs these are available, in many of the small ones they may not be. Third, considerable skill and understanding of all aspects of individualization are required: administering tests, interpreting results, planning IEPs, and linking them to instructional strategies. Teachers and administrators in a number of sites spoke of the complexity of the task and of the need for intensive staff training and support to do it well.

Finally, it takes a lot of time and effort to develop meaningful individual programs for a whole class of children and to monitor their progress carefully. Teachers are faced with voluminous paperwork. Some LEAs deal with this by having aides assist with record-keeping. Where this service is not available, the additional load of individualization may take away teacher time

that would otherwise be used in classroom instruction.

In summary, most of the people with whom we spoke were convinced of the merits of individual education programs for children, and it was an explicit goal in a number of programs. However, this enthusiasm was tempered with realization of the problems described above. Putting aside the limitations on the technology, LEAs have several immediate needs in this area. While some have conducted teacher training, there is clearly a need for more. Under the Educational Amendment of 1978 (PL 95-561), state education agencies may take a more active role here. One of the states we visited has already done so: the Alabama SEA has held several teacher education sessions and has developed an operations manual to assist in the various steps of the process (Nettles, 1976). Similarly, while TACs do not provide technical assistance in areas of program delivery, it seems reasonable that they could become a source of support, since individualization does interface with evaluation to a considerable extent. Finally, even if the technological and training issues are resolved, it seems clear that considerably increased LEA resources will be needed to implement individualized programs for all children enrolled in ECT I. A move in this direction should be accompanied by caution, particularly given the somewhat ambiguous finding of NIE's recent study of the effects of services on student development (Frechtling, 1977). This study indicates that although students in individualized instruction programs in grades above ECT I made substantial gains in achievement, their gains were generally no greater than those of students in less individualized programs.

7.6 Summary

In this chapter we have discussed some features of ECT I programs that constitute the educational program experienced by children. These include

physical and human resources, program content, and organization for instruction. We found most ECT I projects to be extraordinarily well equipped with a wide variety of material and instructional aids. In prekindergarten and kindergarten classes these tended to be unstructured materials for facilitating learning through exploration and play. A shift to a more academic focus occurred in first-grade programs. Space was a scarcer resource. There tended to be several competitors for limited classroom space, and several ECT I projects were operating under severe constraints. Program personnel used the available space in ways that reflected the pedagogical theory and instruction methods emphasized by the particular project.

We found that the adult roles in ECT I projects varied considerably from LEA to LEA, although for some positions they overlapped. The roles of teachers, aides, and resource personnel were important in most ECT I projects at the classroom level. People in these positions were supervised and their activities coordinated by special administrative and technical assistance personnel.

Curriculum efforts also differed across LEAs and grade levels. We found two predominant perspectives on curriculum. One stresses a developmental progression of skills and understanding. The other stresses subject matter objectives. Examination revealed that the two have a number of common elements, although these may be interpreted differently in classroom practice.

Finally, individualization of programs for children is of much concern in ECT I projects. In practice, it varies considerably from LEA to LEA and even from classroom to classroom. Our data suggest that program personnel want very much to move further in this direction but would welcome -- and often need -- additional technical assistance.

CHAPTER 8. ECT I PROJECTS WITHIN A LARGER CONTEXT

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8.6 Summary

8.1 Introduction

Up to this point we have focused on describing features of ECT I projects and the issues that arise from them. But these do not exist in isolation. In this chapter we consider some of the contextual factors that affect program practice. First we look at the role of the SEA Title I office in LEA activities. The educational amendments of 1978 (PL 95-561) greatly expand SEA functions and make explicit responsibilities that were optional. While our information antedates these developments, it nonetheless offers some insights about what is likely to happen under PL 95-561.

Second, we examine the issues involved in the coordination of ECT I programs with regular school services. While this does not arise in prekindergarten projects or some kindergarten projects (where there are no local kindergarten activities), it is important for the remaining ECT I projects. Third, we discuss program continuity across grade levels. This is particularly important in ECT I where prekindergarten programs and some kindergarten programs are physically separated from their later-grade counterparts and often supervised and administered independently.

Finally, we consider the relationship between ECT I programs and other early childhood programs operating within the district--specifically, the coordination of services with special education programs and Head Start. We also examine how available services, each with its own funding constraints, can be made to serve the specific needs of individual children.

8.2 SEA Influence on ECT I Programs

Under Title I, LEAs are responsible for defining programs and the ages at which they are to be offered. To that end, they must determine school eligibility for Title I funds, identify the most pressing educational needs in eligible schools (needs assessment), plan and provide services to best meet those needs, and select

children to receive the services. LEAs must satisfy the SEA that they have taken all of these steps in compliance with applicable regulations.

SEAs, on the other hand, are responsible for:

- assuring proper and efficient performance of LEA duties under Title I
- providing technical assistance with the measurements and evaluations LEAs are required to submit
- reviewing applications and approving them if they meet requirements and do not exceed available funds
- specifying reasons, and providing adequate notice and opportunity for a hearing, if they fail to approve the annual application (Table I, GSEA, Section 141 and 142; 45K FR Part 116.4 and 116.5).

While, in principle, the separation of powers seems clear, in practice there may be some ambiguity. Although SEAs have no authority to determine the content, structure, or age levels of programs funded under Title I, we observed considerable variation across states in the number and type of ECT I programs approved. Do SEAs use their official functions to indirectly influence LEA decisions about programs, and thereby attempt to overlay state priorities on local districts? We raised this issue with representatives of several state and local education agencies. In this section we summarize their responses and our observations.

8.2.1 State Priorities for ECT I. In most states that we visited, SEA representatives reported definite priorities for ECT I. These priorities were organized along several dimensions: number of programs, program content, program structure, teaching strategies, evaluation procedures, tests, and parent education.

Number of ECT I programs. At the state level at least, there seems to be a slight trend toward decreasing the number of Title I early childhood programs, particularly in prekindergarten. Even within our sample, selected because of the

high percentage of ECT I prekindergarten and kindergarten programs, several SEA representatives spoke of reducing efforts in this area. In one, the Title I director was adamant that there would be no new ECT I programs and that existing ones would be curtailed in whatever way possible. In fact, he could document that this was already beginning. He considered early childhood programs an expensive luxury and believed firmly that efforts should be concentrated on promoting academic achievement in later grades. In several other states feelings were less intense, but SEA representatives said that the increased national focus on acquisition of basic educational skills and minimum competencies was bound to reduce early childhood programs in Title I.

In four other states we were told that emphasis on early childhood projects was still strong and expected to continue. However, in three of these states, the Performance and Accounting Office reports for fiscal years 1975, 1976, and 1977 showed a slight decrease in the number of children enrolled in prekindergarten or kindergarten. In the fourth state it remained the same.

Program Content. Most SEA officials advocated pre-academic and academic achievement programs. In eight states we were told that even at the early childhood level, programs were expected to stress skill acquisition in these areas. SEAs did not require that programs be limited to academic readiness and achievement, but suggested that these are the sine qua non for Title I funding. Several state representatives stressed specific content priorities. Pre-reading skills, reading, language development, language enrichment for bilingual children, mathematical ability, and cognitive development were mentioned most often. Others argued that in early education programs these skills can be addressed only within the broader context of integrated personal, social, and cognitive development. They were concerned that focusing on a narrow subset of short-term skills would distort the purpose and long-term value of such programs.

Program Structure. Several SEAs placed a priority on individualizing programs. Some required LEAs to specify in their application the procedures they would use to assure individual program planning. Another approach was technical assistance. One state, in particular, has published an instruction manual (Nettles, 1976) and offers frequent workshops on the subject. Pull-out programs, learning centers, and mainstreaming and continuous multi-grade projects each had advocates at the state level. It was undoubtedly no coincidence that the LEAs we visited generally used the approach preferred by SEA officials. Where the SEA stressed learning centers, we observed classrooms where children worked that way, and where the SEA argued for pull-out programs, we saw pull-outs.

We do not wish, of course, to overstate our case or to imply that SEA officials dictate program practice. In one state, for example, where the state consultant clearly favored an open structured child development approach to learning, we observed an ECT I program that used DISTAR reading and mathematics curriculum materials from kindergarten to grade three. State and local personnel clearly differed on the efficacy of the two approaches, but the LEA made its own choice. In other states, we saw great diversity both among LEAs and within them. We must conclude that, whatever the preferences of state personnel, they were not always conveyed as requirements to LEAs.

Teaching Methods. SEA representatives were usually much less specific about preferred teaching methods. One reported that the state encouraged the use of "structured materials," because these "worked better with poor children." He alluded generally to "the literature" and to the experience of programs in this state. Another state education consultant told us that they discouraged the use of any single skills-oriented curriculum, preferring instead a more developmental perspective. A third vigorously promoted "individual developmental instruction, comprehension rather than decoding, self-esteem and language experience techniques."

In most cases, however, state officials were somewhat vague about what actually happened in classrooms. This may be due to the lack of expertise at the state level. Five of the SEAs we visited, for example, had no childhood specialists on their consultant staff. They therefore tended to confine themselves to procedural advice and issues of compliance with Title I requirements.

Evaluation Procedures. SEAs are charged with monitoring the effectiveness of Title I projects within their state. Therefore, they have a genuine interest in the evaluation procedures and tests used. In general, our field data suggest that SEAs emphasizing basic educational skills programs, even at the early childhood level, favored evaluation methods that use norm-referenced tests, while SEAs emphasizing developmental approaches encouraged the use of criterion-referenced tests or observational instruments.

SEA officials differed on the potential usefulness of the RMC evaluation models. In three states, SEAs encouraged the use of existing RMC models, even for early childhood projects. Two of them felt that the models would be useful in improving programs. Two liked having comparable data (scores reported in NCEs) for aggregation. Officials in these three states thought that models similar to those used in grades two through twelve would also be useful for early childhood projects.

Officials in other states were more critical of the models, mostly on legal and technical grounds. Some reported that LEAs believed the control group model (Model B) to be illegal because services would have to be denied to children in need, while others objected to its use on ethical grounds. They could not justify to parents or to themselves the fact that they were withholding needed services for purposes of research. Critics of the models disliked re-administering pre-tests to avoid regression effects, and having to remove from programs those pupils who scored above the designated cut-off score on the second test. Others,

particularly in areas with a high proportion of children from populations not adequately represented in test norming samples, cited difficulties in establishing a non-treatment expectation from these tests (Model A). Still others found that LEA staff had difficulty in understanding and interpreting NCEs and were particularly concerned when their programs showed NCE losses.

In some states, LEA officials said that longitudinal evaluations would be particularly relevant to early childhood programs. They pointed out that these programs are usually aimed at preventing academic failure in later grades, and that it is important to know whether effects are retained, fade out, or appear only after several years. SEAs' suggestions for longitudinal studies ranged from simple statements of their desirability to a specific model of individual assessment that would incorporate a curvilinear growth model and conclude by testing all early childhood pupils at a common point, probably at the end of first grade. One SEA had tried a longitudinal analysis, but evaluators there, like those in a number of other state offices, noted substantial attrition from Title I programs and difficulty in finding appropriate control groups.

Tests. Regardless of the type of impact evaluation they preferred, SEA officials were almost unanimous in their concern about tests for early childhood. One director, who favored academically oriented programs, said that although he was generally satisfied with tests, some districts used different tests in pre- and posttesting. This was particularly true in first grade where children went from prereading or reading readiness skills to actual reading achievement, so that different tests were necessary to assess the different skills involved. Most SEA staff felt that tests were poorly normed and often of doubtful reliability or validity. Some reported that LEA staff complained of the tenuous relationship between test content and the objectives of the programs they were being used to evaluate. Tests of language acquisition and use and tests to measure socio-

emotional development were said to be particularly deficient.

Parent Education. Representatives in several SEAs gave priority to increased parent involvement in early childhood programs. They stressed parent education: helping parents to understand their role as teachers and to promote educational skills, particularly in language development, concept development, and reading readiness.

Other state agencies placed less emphasis on parent education. It seemed to us that local attitudes often reflected state positions. Although program practice was not uniform from LEA to LEA within states, in those where SEA personnel emphasized parent education, the LEAs we visited all had a parent education component for at least their kindergarten and prekindergarten projects. In states where this was not a priority, parent education was often addressed only through Parent Advisory Councils.

8.2.2 How SEAs Influence Local Practice. All state personnel maintained that LEAs determined the kind of projects they would implement. However, most also expressed opinions about whether early childhood projects should be funded by Title I, and if so what kinds they should be. They insisted that the state agency did not impose its views on the local agencies but acknowledged that they did convey their priorities. In our field work we observed many instances of SEA personnel shaping programs by persuasion, judicious use of program approval authority, publicity-targeted conferences, and in-service training programs. Attitudes of SEAs also emerge implicitly or explicitly during monitoring.

Let us consider examples of how this works. First, although few states have adopted formal policies governing the kinds of Title I programs that can be funded, they have developed guidelines for application and/or evaluation of ECT-I programs. They specify the domains that must be considered in needs assessment (cognitive, affective, psychomotor and social/health); the ways in which performance

standards must be stated; and the criteria for measured gains. They require the name of the test or other objective means that will be used to measure performance.

Such guidelines conceivably pose two problems for early childhood applicants. First, for programs derived from a cognitive developmental or a psycho-social theoretical base, it is theoretically inconsistent to express the full range of real objectives in the required terms. LEAs must either change such programs or compromise the truth in their applications. Second, the dearth of tests for assessing educational need in young children has been well documented (Haney, 1978; Byrk, Apling, and Mathews, 1978, chapter 18). If the requirement is strictly construed and LEAs are held to implementing only what can be measured, the burden of identifying appropriate tests could be heavy enough to prevent LEAs from applying for funds for early childhood programs. Usually where SEA officials encouraged the development of early childhood programs, staff have developed program information in the form of suggested options. Assuming a stance of technical assistance, rather than rule enforcement, these guidelines provide a rationale for prekindergarten programs, and suggest program purposes, objectives, appropriate selection procedures, possible classroom activities, and strategies for parent involvement, support services, evaluation, and in-service training. They are clearly written and designed to be useful to LEAs in planning prekindergarten programs.

Second, SEAs often use application review to effect changes in LEA programs or projects. Our data contain several examples of this. In one instance, an SEA re-analyzed the LEA needs assessment. LEA personnel had argued for a preschool program as a primary education need. The SEA officials, however, felt that the information showed a need for programs for older children. The SEA returned the application suggesting that some preschool classes be eliminated and money allocated to projects in kindergarten through third grade. The issue remained unresolved at the time of our visit.

We also observed state program consultants influencing LEA practices through the provision of both informal and formal technical assistance. For example, in one state, the SEA official had a list of "favorite programs" that he described for us and advocated personally to LEA staff during our visits there. Another SEA representative, when asked for technical assistance on selection procedures, referred an LEA director to a similar program in another part of the state. "We think they're doing a good job there. Why don't you talk with them," he said. A visit to the recommended site occurred within the week.

Finally, SEAs also use monitoring to shape programs. This was mentioned explicitly in three states. In one, the state representative said that they use monitoring data "to see what is going on and to guide LEAs." Another spoke more generally of using the information "to change programs," while the third said they "inform the LEAs of strengths and weaknesses and make recommendations for change."

Although each state we visited professed to address all the Title I requirements, they valued them differently. In a state that placed high priority on monitoring and application review, information dissemination was a pro forma exercise. In another, where information dissemination and technical assistance were taken seriously, even monitoring and review were described as opportunities to help locals develop better programs. We are left with the impression that although the framework for SEA activities is fixed, interpretation and subsequent action depend largely on the qualities and interests of individual SEA personnel.

8.2.3 The Local Perspective on SEA Involvement. Information on how local Title I administrators viewed SEA involvement was difficult to obtain. In most states, representatives of the SEA accompanied our field research team. Although they were almost always careful to explain that they were there "unofficially," their presence undoubtedly often inhibited totally candid responses by LEA

personnel to questions on this topic. We inferred from the sparse data we did manage to collect that local education agency reactions to these state initiatives were mixed. Most were convinced that state officials had their best interests at heart but were perhaps caught between Title I requirements and what they might judge to be the best practice in early childhood programming. LEA officials saw the state role as one of interpreting the law, of "keeping us honest and the money coming in." In several LEAs, administrators praised state officials for informing them of and helping them obtain additional monies. In one case, for example, the SEA consultant knew that the LEA staff wanted to supplement their Title I program with a home-based preschool project. When additional Title III money became available, she informed local officials and helped them draft a successful application for it. The program, after demonstrating its effectiveness was ultimately transferred to Title I funding. Local personnel were convinced that without SEA advocacy the program might never have been implemented. They were unanimous in their enthusiasm for the consultant's role. "She's always looking for new ways to get what we need."

Several LEA representatives praised the state agency for transmitting information. Often this was done informally. In one LEA we visited, for example, staff were clearly concerned about ECT I selection procedures. The SEA representative who accompanied us acknowledged the concern and the reasons for it, and suggested ways in which other LEAs within the state were dealing with the problem. He offered no definitive answers, but arranged a meeting between representatives of several communities to discuss options. LEAs in other states praised SEA officials for putting them into contact with programs similar to theirs elsewhere in the state.

Where criticism of SEA assistance arose, it was usually in terms of there not being enough of it. "You really should get out here more often" was a common

theme. Given the current limits on SEA budgets, however, it is difficult to see how this can be remedied in the immediate future.

Finally, there were a few LEAs in which dissatisfaction with the state role was more substantive. One Title I director, for example, reported that he could not get the kind of help he needed, particularly in designing and carrying out evaluations. He believed that this was because the state staff was not trained in either evaluation methodology or early childhood program practice. He added that the sole SEA activity was to assure LEA compliance with the regulations. Interestingly, this complaint occurred in a state where the SEA carefully kept itself between the LEAs and the regional Technical Assistance Center. "They [the LEAs] must come to us first. If we don't know, we'll call the TAC," the SEA consultant told us.

In summary, the LEA-SEA relationship as we observed it was generally good. So long as the SEAs fulfill their required functions but allow LEAs authority over issues of content, structure, and age levels of programs, LEAs are prepared to respond to formal SEA requests. These relationships form a kind of inter-organizational detente.

8.3 Coordination of Title I With Regular School Programs

We dsecribe in this section the ways in which ECT I programs interface with regular district programs of the same grade level. This topic was raised by LEA personnel in several sites and seems to involve four issues: continuity of program content and materials, scheduling of services, coordination of children's individual education plans, and communication among staff. The importance of these issues tended to depend on how services are structured. Where Title I services were mainstreamed with regular classroom activities, they seemed less relevant, while pull-out programs, they appeared quite salient.

8.3.1 Coordination of Program Content and Materials. In most of the ECT I programs visited, Title I and district personnel were working toward the same objectives and using the same curriculum and similar materials. Title I services were designed to help children who were having difficulties or falling behind, usually simply through more exposure to the same kind of activities. Although different texts and teaching material were often used, largely to avoid boring the children, LEAs usually tried to assure that experiences in the two settings complemented one another. For example, if the district program emphasized coding and decoding skills in reading and language arts and used a program phonetic approach, the Title I program did the same. To facilitate coordination, at least one of the larger LEAs has developed a complex system that cross-references relevant sections of published material by content areas in the local curriculum. Hence, if a district teacher is using one set of materials, the Title I specialist can find others to supplement instruction.

In general, Title I services tended to rely on more structured curricula, probably partly as a result of the time constraints imposed on teaching by the pull-out period. Teachers stressed that they have the children for so little time that they must keep them task-directed. Further, some LEA officials responded that "our kinds of kids learn better in structured programs." Elliptical references to an undefined literature were made on several occasions. In selecting material, ECT I staff turned to more analytic texts, using phonics programs such as Keys to Reading (Economy Press) or Lippincott's Basic Reading Program.

In two LEAs, Title I and district programs were using very different materials and instructional styles. They argued that this was necessary in order to satisfy the requirement that Title I programs supplement district programs. In one, the district program was based on published curricula that emphasized phonetic analysis of words and a systematic presentation of material according to

rules of phonics. The Title I curriculum used a more eclectic approach, drawing on children's daily activities for relevant words and concepts. Thus in one setting, the children would be learning to recognize many words with a similar linguistic construct (e.g., words with similar vowel configurations) while in the other they might meet words related by theme but not by structure (e.g., anteater, lion, and polar bear, which may all relate to a recent trip to the zoo but carry conflicting messages about the sounds of vowels). This dissonance was troublesome to a number of teachers and administrators, because "these children need a lot of direction and just can't cope with both programs."

8.3.2 Coordinating Children's Individual Programs. Closely related to the issue of overall program coordination is the concern that individual educational plans for a child be consistent for Title I and the district program. This is particularly germane for first-grade programs and the few kindergarten programs that use pull-outs. In these cases, the regular classroom teacher and the Title I specialist each work on a program for an individual child. While each teacher may have a plan, for various logistic reasons the plans may not be coordinated. Thus, the child may pursue a separate set of objectives with each teacher. The LEAs we visited varied in the emphasis they placed on coordination. In most, the two teachers conferred several times each year. In a few, conferences were held as often as once a month. Unfortunately, in others, conferences almost never occurred, and except for written reports at the end of the year, there was no communication.

8.3.3 Scheduling of Services. The difficulty of scheduling ECT I services is a significant issue in the minds of many LEA staff. Several teachers complained that Title I pull-out programs take children away from equally important classroom activities. While Title I services might not supplant regular classroom instruction in reading or mathematics, they by definition supplant something else. Some

teachers complained that Title I children missed the more play-oriented activities. Several teachers, arguing from a developmental perspective, believed that these concrete experiences were often what the children needed most.

A few teachers and Title I specialists mentioned the difficulties of coordinating children's activities with Title I teachers' schedules. Classroom teachers had to worry about which children were receiving special services at what times and organize classroom schedules accordingly. Specialists, on the other hand, had to avoid conflicts wtih other special services (e.g., physical education, music, or art) for each grade.

8.3.4 Communication Among Staff. Interstaff communication was generally regarded as good by the people with whom we spoke. The main problem was lack of time and sometimes of accessibility. One program evaluator reported that one of the biggest complaints about Title I programs was lack of communication between Title I and classroom teachers. Both maintained very busy schedules and seldom had time to do all they thought they should. Simply getting together was often difficult. This was exacerbated in LEAs where Title I offices were located in a separate building, often at some distance from the school. Teachers reported that although they often intended to go to consult with Title I personnel, in fact they seldom did so. Title I teachers in these programs, on the other hand, felt that they spent too much time going from building to building. This problem was particularly acute where a single Title I specialist served more than one school.

One way of dealing with the communication problem was to conduct joint meetings on topics concerning both groups. One LEA conducted a survey of all teachers to determine the extent of the need for communication between Title I and district personnel. Responses showed that both groups thought an improvement necessary. As a result, a joint committee was created to seek ways to coordinate in-service training. The success of these sessions is currently being evaluated in a follow-up study.

8.4 Continuity Across Grade Levels.

Education programs at the first-grade level are generally predicated upon certain assumptions about children's previous experiences. Program personnel expect that particular social skills, behavioral organization skills, perceptual and motor skills, and cognitive information have been acquired. Children who do not meet these criteria are judged below standard or below grade level and targeted for remedial help. On the other hand, early childhood programs, particularly those in prekindergarten and kindergarten, are usually designed to prevent these deficits. However, they are often put into place without a full examination of whether the experiences they provide and the expectations they engender are in fact continuous with those at later grades. Even allowing for necessary differences due to the age of the children--a four-year-old will not write as well as an eight-year-old, or even attend to a task for as long a period--it seems reasonable to inquire whether expectations across contiguous grade levels are consistent.

This is not a new concern, of course. Continuity of program experience--particularly between prekindergarten and kindergarten, and between kindergarten and the elementary grades--is a major issue in the early childhood literature. It has been a focus of research and development of the Administration for Children, Youth and Families (ACYF), such as Project Developmental Continuity. The current Head Start Basic Educational Skills Initiative (Kline, 1978), for example, includes it as an essential component. However, nowhere is it particularly well defined or, we suspect, clearly understood. Because of the unique relationship between ECT I programs and the total school program of which they are at least nominally a part, we carefully examined this issue in our field research. As with so many other issues, we found the picture very different depending upon where we went.

Several LEAs have made a careful and thoughtful effort to coordinate programs at the various grade levels. ECT I programs are the first step in a set of continuous educational experiences. In one case, for example, this took the form of a "Little Schools Program" in which grades prekindergarten to three were conceived as an educational block. Children entered in the fall of the prekindergarten year and were exposed to a fairly conventional nursery school experience. By mid-year, however, they were already receiving group instruction according to common needs and were working together with structured learning materials (DISTAR language materials). These would be supplemented with other reading material directed at similar objectives.

Other LEAs addressed continuity by extending criterion-referenced material for the elementary grades downward to meet the needs of four- or five-year-olds. Teachers at the various grade levels met to determine what they expected of children when they entered their class and what they ought to be able to do at the end of a year. These objectives were analyzed and compared for consistency or inconsistency, and in some cases adaptations were made.

For the most part, we found a remarkable degree of continuity between kindergarten and first-grade programs. Moreover, examination of a good many curricula for older grades suggests that continuity persists into the upper grades. The picture is not quite so clear for prekindergarten and later-grade programs. In several LEAs, prekindergartens seem to have developed in isolation from elementary programs. Moreover, they are often administered and even housed separately from the rest of the elementary school education program. As a result, staff have little chance to interact. Teachers in these cases complained:

> They [the school personnel] don't know what we're doing with children. They don't even pay any attention to the records we send to them.

It is only fair to point out that this seems to be something of a chicken-and-egg problem. If elementary school personnel failed to inquire into the raison d'être of prekindergarten programs and to make full use of the information available from them, prekindergarten personnel also failed to examine the objectives of later grades and to see how their programs might better coordinate with them.

The issue of continuity between early childhood programs and later elementary years was raised by teachers in many sites. In one LEA, continuity was a major objective for staff training, and Title I and district personnel at all prekindergarten and elementary grade levels met regularly to establish it on firmer grounds. More often, however, regret and dissatisfaction by staff or parents was not translated into plans for improvement.

On balance, most ECT I practitioners are sensitive to issues of continuity of experience. This is not just an organizational problem; it is rooted in the inadequacy of current theories of early child development. As we have pointed out, there is no universal agreement on the prerequisite experiences for successful functioning in the early elementary years. In fact, given the variability of schools across this country, this relationship may be strongly site-specific. The problem here is one that is germane to early childhood education generally and by no means peculiar to Title I. If anything, ECT I programs are probably doing a better job than most in establishing and maintaining continuity of educational experience for young children.

8.5 Relationship with Other Programs

During our field research we identified the following staggering--but probably only partial--array of funding sources and programs, all of which, in addition to Title I, potentially serve ECT I eligible children: Head Start, Follow Through, ACYF demonstration programs such as Project Developmental Continuity, Title I

(Migrant), Title I (bilingual), Title III, Title IV, Title VII, Title XX, Right to Read, ESAA, state compensatory education programs, state special education programs for the handicapped, state bilingual education programs, and private nursery schools. In some LEAs, funding sources were combined in one classroom. In one site, for example, an administrator reported that as many as thirteen programs may contribute to the funding of a single-grade-level educational effort. In other LEAs, one funding source was used primarily at some grade levels while other sources were used at others. For example, Title VII funds might be used in the primary grades and Title I funds in the middle and secondary grades.

The exact constellation of programs within each community is almost unique to that community. Rather than attempt the enormous task of examining each combination we found in the field, we focus here on how ECT I programs relate to two important entities: Project Head Start and special education services. We conclude this section with a discussion of service coordination, which is often raised in the context of multiple-service programs, and which may have categorical funding.

8.5.1 Relationship of ECT I to Head Start. In addition to ECT I, almost every LEA we visited had one or more Head Start center. The relationship of the two programs varies from LEA to LEA. At least as we observed it from the public school perspective, it was often one of indifference. The Title I director of one large LEA, for example, dismissed Head Start with a shrug. "We know they're there but we have as little to do with them as we can," he said. In a few sites there was hostility and competition between the programs. One program director spoke with great intensity of "all the money Head Start has while I have to scratch for every penny." It seems fair to say that at the organizational level there is mutual distrust.

In a few projects we saw personal communication between staff members of

ECT I and Head Start programs. Teachers in the two programs met to discuss ideas and material as well as information on potentially eligible children. Recruitment of families seemed to be an issue of common concern and one on which the two programs seemed willing to cooperate. In one community we observed overlapping services between ECT I and Head Start. Several children enrolled in a daily Head Start program were also enrolled in a weekly ECT I home-visit program. In this site, communication between teachers in the two programs had high priority. The ECT I teacher reported that she visited the Head Start center almost every week.

On an even brighter note, we also saw a few sites making a real effort to coordinate resources both to meet the needs of as many families as possible and to strengthen all early childhood programs in the community. In one site, for example, the two programs were operated together. Children met in the same classes, worked with the same teachers, and received instruction as need indicated. Fiscal separation was scrupulously maintained, however, with a separate set of books for each program. The regulations of the two programs are also carefully observed, and although procedures such as screening are implemented together, children are placed in one or the other program according to the program selection criteria. It is possible to identify on paper all children in the Head Start Program and all being served by ECT I. In practice, however, their educational experiences were all but indistinguishable, and the community operated a unified and efficient preschool program for both Title I and Head Start children.

The character of the ECT I/Head Start relationship seems to be due to several factors. The first is the administrative framework of the two programs. While Title I funds, even at the early childhood level, come primarily through the public school system, many Head Start centers are administered through community action agencies. Since in many LEAs these organizations are often in adversarial

positions, one would not expect to find--and we did not find--much interagency collaboration.

Second, eligibility criteria determine how children are chosen for the two programs and have implications for the relationship between them. The criteria, or course, differ somewhat, but they also overlap. This raises questions about who is served by which program and how the decisions are worked out in practice. In some communities, program personnel reported that an unofficial but almost caste-like system exists. At the top level are the Head Start programs. These tend to be well funded by Title I standards and offer a number of desirable services beyond education services. The eligibility criterion is only income. No other deficit label is attached to the child. Next come ECT I programs, less well funded, focusing almost exclusively on education services for children. Here "demonstrated educational deficit" determines eligibility. Finally, there are special education programs. Although they may be well funded, they are limited to children with "real problems," and the label "handicapped" is applied to participants.

Clearly, many parents in these communities regard Head Start as the most desirable, and there is competition for spaces in Head Start centers. Parents unsuccessful at this level then proceed down the list. Some parents, however, find the emphasis on academic goals in ECT I very appealing. They eschew the play-like atmosphere of Head Start and try to have their children enrolled in ECT I programs instead. In both cases, the differences between the programs are accentuated. In some communities this actually results in a competition for children and an adversarial relationship between the two programs. Parents are then left alone to decide on their child's program.

8.5.2 Relationship of ECT I and special education services. The relationship between ECT I projects and special education services seemed particularly complex. Several states had special education laws, each with its own provisions and rules. Morever, with PL 94-142 funds imminent but the regulations governing their availability not yet fully understood, program personnel in many sites were confused and somewhat apprehensive. Concern seemed to focus on what services could be provided from what source, how to arrange access to special education services for children also served under Title I, and how to decide which of the two programs should serve a given child.

In most of the LEAs we visited, special education services were funded and administered separately from Title I. They operated out of different sites. Although there was some communication at the administrative level about planning issues, at the classroom level the services tended to operate independently. In many sites even mild to moderately handicapped children of elementary school age received educational services in separate classes with specially trained personnel.

At the prekindergarten level, the situation was somewhat different. First, most state special education requirements do not mandate services for children below age five, and so none were available. Many of the children screened for Title I prekindergarten were admitted and provided with services in full recognition that they might later be phased into special education programs. These were not, however, cases where the handicap was severe and profound. We saw none of the latter in any ECT I prekindergartens. For the most part, Title I personnel were comfortable with having moderately handicapped children in their prekindergarten programs. They found the behavior and capabilities of these children not far discrepant from those of others, and expected a significantly improved educational prognosis.

There is also concern with providing special education services within

Title I. In several of the LEAs, ECT I programs had retained support personnel (e.g., speech therapists, social workers, and nurses) at least part-time to help treat children with mild to moderate or potential handicaps. Program personnel feared that in the future these people would have to be subsumed under programs funded by PL 94-142 and eliminated from Title I allocations. In fact, in several LEAs special service personnel had been stricken from the proposed budget for the coming fiscal year. While in principle the services would still exist in the district, Title I staff feared they would have less ready access to them.

The selection issue was particularly relevant to early childhood programs. Given the ambiguities and differences of opinion in the definition of "educational deficit" and more general concepts of handicap, particularly in mild to moderate developmental delays, there is real confusion over where children properly belong. Is a four-year-old who speaks very little and uses somewhat immature syntax educationally deficient (Title I eligible) or moderately retarded (special education eligible)? In practice, really only time can tell.

Concern also was expressed about eligibility criteria for PL 94-142 and Title I services. LEA staff worried that some children who need services might not in fact be served because they do not fully satisfy entry requirements for either program. Similarly, a child might have to be placed in a less appropriate program because of these criteria.

Another problem stems from the evaluation and accountability requirements placed on Title I programs. Staff may feel, for example, that a Title I placement is best for a particular child. However, they may fear that they may be unable to show measurable short-term gains, so that the child's presence would compromise their overall evaluation results. They might therefore feel constrained to make a special education placement, for no such program evaluation require-

ment exists under PL 94-142.

8.5.3 Matching Services to Individual Children. Up to this point, we have been looking at the issue of service coordination from an institutional perspective. We need now to look at it in terms of the individual child and of how children's needs are mapped into available services. Each program has some sort of screening or selection process that marks the entry point into the system. In most cases it tends to exist as a separate entity. It is often up to parents to initiate entry into a program, and the choice of programs seems to be largely determined by informal personal networks rather than by informed, rational decision making. If the child can be shown to have a need and space exists in the program, the child is accepted; the question whether that placement best meets the child's needs or whether a more appropriate one exists in the community is never addressed. Where children are referred from one program to another, it is usually because funding constraints prohibit enrollment of that child (e.g., doesn't live in a Title I eligible area), or because the program is already full. It is seldom done with the aim of identifying optimal program placement.

Of course, some SEAs and LEAs are beginning to come to grips with this problem. In a few that we visited, various local agencies have drawn together in an attempt to improve service coordination in the community. Responsibility for the task rests in the hands of a single agency. In one LEA, for example, this inter-agency group has developed a multidisciplinary screening program for all children at entry into school. The coordinating agency also catalogs various services, maintains communication with contact persons in each agency, and is knowledgeable about the eligibility requirements and services of the different programs. After each child's needs are assessed, the coordinating agency tries to match them with the services available in the community.

PART IV. A SEPARATE LOOK AT PARENT EDUCATION

CHAPTER 9. PARENT INVOLVEMENT

9.1 Introduction

9.2 Parent Education: A Conceptual Scheme

9.3 Parent Education in ECT I

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9.1 Introduction

In the literature review (Haney, 1978) and in chapter 5 of this report, we discussed the trend toward increased parent involvement in early childhood programs generally. Our field research confirms this trend in early childhood programs funded under Title I. A narrow interpretation of the intent of Title I might throw some doubt on the appropriateness of supporting parent education activities under this Title. Because this issue was frequently raised during our study and seems particularly germane to the early childhood realm, we have devoted two chapters to it. In this chapter we consider the nature of parent education activities in ECT I, and in chapter 10 we examine the way they are evaluated.

Before describing and analyzing the programs as we observed them. let us review some of the forces that have recently advanced the role of parents in early childhood programs. The middle 1960s spawned a number of preschool demonstration projects aimed at enhancing children's experiences in a classroom-type setting. (See for example, Bereiter & Engleman, 1966; Bushell, 1960, 1970; Weikart, Rogers, Adcock, & McClelland, 1971; Nimnicht, McAfee, and Mier, 1969; Gotkin, 1968.) While most of these efforts showed impressive short-term gains, their effects seemed to dissipate over a few years. This finding led to consensus that early childhood programs confined to the educational experiences of children in the classroom are inadequate to break the effects of the cycle of poverty.

At the same time, considerable research and theory suggest the importance of the parent-child relationship in early childhood development (Ainsworth, 1971; Bowlby, 1968; Rubenstein, 1971; Hess & Shipman, 1965). Program developers, in an efforts to prevent educational deficits, therefore turned to

that relationship and imparted to it a teaching function (Painter, 1968; Gray and Klaus, 1965; Badger, 1971, 1972; Gordon, 1967, 1969, 1971; Levenstein, 1971, 1972, 1974). Parents were taught to teach their children and to prepare them for school. Indeed, parents as teachers became a dominant theme among early childhood educators. The apparent success of this technique was documented in 1974 when Bronfenbrenner (1974), after reviewing several dozen longitudinal studies of early childhood intervention programs, indicated that the programs most likely to achieve sustained effects were those that involved parent participation. He stated the following:

> The evidence indicates that the family is the most effective and economical system for fostering and sustaining the development of the child. The evidence indicates further that the involvement of the child's family as an active participant is critical to the success of any intervention program. Without such family involvement any effects of intervention, at least in the cognitive sphere, appear to erode fairly rapidly once the program ends. In contrast, the involvement of the parents as partners in the enterprise provides an on-going system which can reinforce the effects of the program while it is in operation, and help to sustain them after the program ends. (Bronfenbrenner, 1974, p. 55)

The political climate of the times also plays an important role here. To be responsive to the people they serve, programs such as Title I require an explicit role for parents (McLaughlin, 1977). Parent involvement, in this case, is used to assure program accountability.

The two ideas -- parents as teachers and program accountability to parents -- shaped a broad concept of parent involvement. It includes teaching parents about child development, early education, and the art of parenting, in an effort to help them improve the child's home conditions. It also includes encouraging parents' participation in school-sponsored activities or advisory councils, and changing parental behavior as it relates to education and the school.

Some federal education programs have sought to encourage both parent participation and parent education. For example, parents served as classroom aides and participated in advisory councils for Projects Head Start and Follow Through (Haney, 1977, 1978). Other projects, like Project Home Start, concentrated more on educating parents than on parent participation (Goodrich, Nauta and Rubin, 1974). In recent years, a few demonstration projects -- notably those funded by the Administration of Children, Youth and Families (ACYF), such as the Child and the Family Resource Programs (O'Keefe, 1975) -- have taken an even broader view of the needs of children and parents. They are trying ro promote total child development and to meet children's needs by working through the family as a unit. Using a Head Start Program as a base for developing a community-wide service delivery network, they coordinate all community resources for families. In this type of program both parent participation and parent education are essential.

Title I too has been characterized by sustained concern with the role of parents (McLaughlin, 1975). In our initial telephone survey of state Title I directors, we were told repeatedly that parent involvement was particularly salient in ECT I programs. The impression of many state officials was that the younger the child, the more involved the parents tended to be in the education process. In our subsequent field research, we sought to understand more clearly the role of parents in ECT I programs. Our findings suggest that both parent education and parent participation are prevalent in ECT I. We will discuss each of them in subsequent sections of this chapter.

9.2 Parent Education: A Conceptual Scheme

We can distinguish among three types of objectives for parent education

projects. First, there are those directed at changing parent knowledge, attitudes, and behavior as they are focused on their child. A second type is to change parents' knowledge and attitudes as they pertain to parents' interaction with school services and personnel. Finally, there are objectives that go beyond the parental role and try to meet the personal needs of parents as adults. Such projects may, for example, provide instruction in work-related skills or career or family counseling services. We observed ECT I programs with goals in both of the first two categories but not in the third. While we acknowledge that programs with this emphasis exist, since we found none of them funded through Title I, we will not discuss them in this report. Figure 9.1 summarizes the two types of objective we did see and suggests typical examples of each.

Parent education programs concerned with fostering knowledge about children (cell A) might deal with various topics. They might instruct parents in matters of child development, in ways to manage child behavior, or in direct teaching strategies. A reasonable subject for instruction would be reading readiness. In talking about it with parents, program personnel might analyze the various skills involved, suggest ways to motivate the child to learn, and propose appropriate reading material.

Programs focusing on the influence of parent attitudes on children's learning (cell B) might try to make parents aware of their expectations of the child, and their attitude toward the child's interests, skills, and limitations. Parents are strongly encouraged to believe that the way they interact with their children makes a difference to their children's future. The importance of being accessible to children and of conveying interest in them and their activities are stressed. Parents are helped to provide experiences

Table 9.1

Examples of Parent Education Goals

To Produce Change in	Focus	
	Toward Child	Toward School
Parental Knowledge	A To understand the health, nutritional, and dental needs of their child; To know what play material is appropriate at different ages.	D To be aware of services available and how to use them, e.g., referral for special education; To know what tasks their child is working on in school.
Parental Attitude	B To appreciate their child's characteristics of temperament and learning; To develop realistic and flexible expectations of their child.	E To trust school personnel; To view themselves as helpers in the education of their child.
Parental Function	C To change their verbal behavior; To change their patterns of responsiveness.	F To seek appropriate services, e.g., referral for special education; To initiate and attend conferences with teachers with appropriate frequency.

and select materials that are interesting and challenging to their child.

Programs stressing changes in parental function (cell C) might be more directive. They might demonstrate specific types of behavior for parents to imitate. These might be teaching methods to help the child learn a skill such as letter recognition, or specific instructions on how to change troublesome child behavior. To advance reading readiness, the parent might be shown games or instruction techniques and how to use them. Parents might also be encouraged and shown how to reward and reinforce achievement.

Turning now to projects that focus on parental knowledge, attitudes, and function related to schools and education, we see activities of a somewhat different sort. Many parents, especially those who live in poverty, have had negative experiences with public institutions. They come to schools with feelings that almost preclude working together effectively. Often the most needy parents are the most reluctant to deal directly with school personnel. The goals of many parent education projects include breaking through this barrier by informing parents fully of what the total program offers, especially as it is relevant to their child (cell D). Parents are given easily understood information about available services, how to obtain them, and personnel who will help.

At the same time, many projects strive to change parent attitudes toward the school. Many are moving away from the role of pater familias and encouraging parents to become more active advocates. The ideal goal is a partnership between school and parents working together in the best interests of the child (cell E).

Finally, in our last cell (F) we have specific changes in parent functioning vis-a-vis the schools and the education process. Encouraging parent

involvement in order to assure program accountability belongs in this domain. Other objectives include changed parent behavior in terms of seeking teacher conferences with appropriate frequency, initiating requests for special services when necessary, and completing required health and dental examinations on schedule.

In practice, of course, projects have goals in more than one of the categories discussed above. The classification nevertheless is useful in determining the emphasis of various parent involvement projects and in providing a framework for examining evaluation questions.

9.3 Parent Education in ECT I

Parent education in ECT I programs is a local option. Title I is aimed at serving the needs of educationally disadvantaged children. Localities with parent education projects assume, however, that these needs can be met through activities involving the parents of these children. Title I staff in these LEAs argued that the parents of educationally disadvantaged children themselves need education and training. Some saw ECT I as a reasonable means for providing this, and either initiated projects specifically to educate parents or formalized existing program components for this purpose. Program personnel in these LEAs were convinced that children whose parents participate in parent education projects are better prepared for and do better in school than children whose parents do not. They argued that children often succeed because parents have become more attuned to their developmental needs and therefore are better teachers.

9.3.1 Grade Level Differences. As with so many features of ECT I projects, there are conspicuous differences in parent education efforts across grade levels. In general, LEAs tend to place heavy emphasis on parent educa-

tion for three-year-olds, a shared emphasis with more traditional four- and five-year-olds, and a reduced emphasis therafter.

Prekindergarten. Parent education was a major feature in almost every prekindergarten program we visited. Their goals placed them in the first column of our schema, in cells A, B, and C. Many projects took place in the home, although a few coordinated parent education activities with classroom experiences for children. Most prekindergarten parent education projects were primarily preventive measures or school readiness efforts, designed to ensure that children did not enter school behind their peers in certain areas, particularly language and cognitive ability. Project efforts thus concentrated on preventing potential failure and helping the child acquire the skills that would enable him to meet the expectations of the kindergarten classroom. The crucial element, however, was the parents' contribution. Parents were repeatedly told that their attitude and behavior mattered, and were shown how to help their children. Parent education curricula emphasized several domains. Some were skills in particular "school subject areas." For example, teachers stressed ways in which parents could help their children learn the alphabet, count, and recognize letters and numerals. Others were more attitudinal: Parents were instructed how to teach their children to learn to finish a project, to sit still and listen to a story, or to ask and answer questions. Still others concerned psychomotor skills. Parents were taught that cutting, pasting, and using crayons or pencils successfully were important skills and they were shown various ways of encouraging their acquisition.

Kindergarten. Many of the kindergarten programs we visited also had parent education components. The strategies generally differed slightly from those for prekindergarten. None of these projects were exclusively home-based

although some did require teachers to make home visits. Most encouraged regular parent-teacher conferences in school by reserving specific periods of teacher time for them. The objectives were also slightly different, shifting emphasis from parents as teachers toward teachers as teachers. The underlying purposes of kindergarten parent education seemed to be to familiarize parents with the tasks and expectations of the school and to give them ways of reinforcing these at home. Thus, most fell into the second column of our schema, although many also included objectives in the first column. Teachers dealt not only with specific content areas but with continuity of attitudes and styles of behavior management. As one director said, "We'll never get anywhere if they [parents] are doing it one way and we are trying to do it another." The main distinction between these projects and their prekindergarten counterparts is that school learning is now considered primary and the home auxiliary.

Coincident with the shift in emphasis, we also noted a change in attitude toward informal parent participation in program activities. Although parents were clearly welcome -- and needed -- in informal ways (accompanying classes on field trips, preparing holiday celebrations, and attending fund-raising events, for example), they were less likely to be used as aides or volunteers. Casual dropping in was also less common. In some LEAs parents were aware of this change and less than happy about it. They reported that once the child entered the formal school setting (kindergarten or first grade, depending upon the LEA), "the teachers don't want us there." Some said, "They're afraid of us. They don't want us to know what they are doing -- or not doing."

First Grade. Few first-grade programs had a formal parent education component. Those that did concentrated on school-related activities (cells D and F). They acknowledged the importance of having parents feel a sense of

involvement in their child's education and commitment to its success, but they relied on required procedures (PACs), informal methods, and the initiative of teachers to foster it. In fact, in many projects there was no direct communication between Title I staff and parents. Because they worked with children for discrete periods, either in the classroom or in resource rooms, Title I teachers reported on the child's progress to his classroom teacher, who in turn, communicated with the parents. It is conceivable that the Title I teachers' reports could be accompanied by specific suggestions to parents about ways to help their children, but in fact, no one reported that they did so.

In summary, our observations support the impressions of SEA Title I directors, the research findings of Hess (1976), and the analysis of Datta (1975). The manner in which parents are involved in education activities varies with the ages of their children. For parents of younger children, the emphasis is on using the parent-child relationship to foster children's growth. For parents of children closer to school age, the emphasis returns to the classroom, and parent education efforts are seen as auxiliary.

9.3.2 Organizational Strategies. Parent education projects are organized in one of three ways. In some LEAs, they are essentially independent entities. We observed these only at the prekindergarten level. In other LEAs, parent education goals are incorporated in the primary educational effort. Classroom teachers are asked to develop activities for working with parents. While the primary service targets are the children, parent education activities are seen as powerful instruments for influencing them. Finally, in some LEAs parent education is an informal add-on. Those projects specify few, if any, objectives for parent education and simply work on the basis of staff intuition about what individual parents should be doing. A few of these are kindergarten

projects; most are first grade. While these programs all maintain the required parent involvement in PACs, their priorities are qualitatively different than those in the first two groups.

Independent Projects. In some LEAs the ECT I preschool project was essentially a parent education effort. Most of these were for four-year-olds, and a few for three-year-olds. Most were home-based, patterned after earlier research efforts (Levenstein, 1971, 1972; Kearns and Badger, 1969; Gordon, 1969). Their goals, as stated in their applications, were in three areas. First, they sought to improve the child's performance in language, cognition, and school-related tasks; second, to improve the parent's skills as a teacher; and third, to increase parents' awareness of the potency of their role and the importance of their involvement in their child's education. Projects approached these goals by helping parents understand the child and the task. They often spoke about general issues of child development, stressing, for example, the child's curiosity and ability to learn and play at the same time. They focused on the individual child by calling attention to the particular way in which he had mastered a skill or approached a situation. Finally, they provided direct instruction in skill areas. They might, for example, teach a parent several games to encourage early reading skills, or provide a toy that required the child to count, sort, seriate, or otherwise engage in a mathematics-related activity. The emphasis placed on general concepts and specific skills varied from project to project, and, we suspect, from teacher to teacher.

Home-visit programs vary from LEA to LEA as well as from family to family. They also share certain characteristics. There is a strong commitment to individualization in order to meet the needs, interests, and skills of both

parent and child. Home teachers usually work from a check-list or profile of the child's skill level and from a lesson plan that specifies objectives for parent and child. In principle, the activities and materials selected for the visit are chosen to match these objectives.

The actual conduct of home visits varied considerably, however. One home visit was described thus:

> The curriculum for this program is somewhat eclectic. Home visitors are encouraged to individualize lessons for specific children. Typically, the home visitor takes with her a 'brown bag' which she has filled with things such as a puzzle, a game, perhaps a homemade toy or two, materials with which the parent can make other toys, and always a book. The lesson began with a warm-up session. The teacher asked the parent how the child was, how things had been going, and generally tried to establish a warm and relaxed mood. She then asked the parent for last week's assignment and they went over together what the child had done. Next she introduced new activities to fulfill the objectives that she had determined for the child that day. She concluded the session with a wrap-up activity, a story this time but it might have been a game. Before leaving, she recapitulated the lesson with the mother summarizing what it was she wanted the child to learn, and pointing out the salient features of her own presentation. She made explicit suggestions for how the mother could follow up on that. She also left an assignment for the next week. In this program, homework assignments for parents are central to the visit. They are always given and they are always collected. It is thought that they provide a demonstration of commitment both on the part of staff and on the part of the parent.

This was a well-organized home visit. There were clear objectives and the activities were well chosen to address them. From a purely pedagogic perspective it was well conceived and well executed. In another home visit, however, the process was described as follows:

> We visited a family of three children. The child enrolled in this program was the middle one, a girl of three. Her older sister now four years old had been part of the program the previous year and was currently enrolled in the center-based program. A younger brother was a candidate for the program the following year.

> We were greeted at the door by the father. The mother was usually available for home visits but the father seemed equally comfortable in this role. The children were delighted to see us. The target child jumped quickly to the table, ready to work. The home visitor went through a variety of difficult tasks, including shape recognition, matching shapes to patterns, drawing shapes, coloring, cutting, and looking at and talking about a story. The child seemed perplexed by many of the activities but the teacher proceeded ahead.
>
> The session ended on an informal note, with additional family members joining us in a joyous game of "Ring Around the Rosey."

Here, the observer expressed concerns about the match between the tasks presented and the capabilities of the child. Many activities seemed too difficult or irrelevant for her. However, the observer also remarked upon the child's affection for the teacher and her comfort in working with her. She noted the sense of shared purpose that the home visitor conveyed to the father and his earnest involvement in the entire lesson. The session dramatically illustrated the two components of this mode of service delivery. The first involves formal behavioral objectives for acquiring skill and knowledge. The latter, perhaps more important in the long run, involves the motivation to achieve and the sense of participation in learning that is engendered in parent and child.

Components Within Projects. In some LEAs, parent education activities were components of the overall ECT I program. Several sites, for example, conducted parent discussion groups or workshops. Since we were unable to attend any of these because of scheduling conflicts, our knowledge about them is somewhat limited. Moreover, few projects had any written descriptions of the purpose of the parent groups or their specific goals. Program personnel spoke in general terms of the importance of encouraging parents to be teachers of their children and of involving them more closely in the school program. Our impression is that the meetings were generally a somewhat eclectic smorgasbord

of make-and-take workshops, lectures, and discussions.

Other sites stressed teacher contact with families in the parent education component of their ECT I program. Teachers or aides were expected to confer regularly with parents, either at home or in school. These conferences were less frequent than the home visits of independent parent education projects. Teachers said they were supposed to occur "about once a month" but usually took place less often. Some projects, acknowledging the time necessary to plan and make offective home visits, scheduled classes for children only four days a week, leaving the fifth free for parent education activities. Others simply superimposed the task on the regular schedule.

The stated purpose of these contacts was twofold: to inform parents of what was happening in school and how they could help, and to make teachers aware of home and family conditions that might affect school performance. As with the parent groups, however, the objectives and content of these efforts were often hard to discern. Individual teachers seemed to use them in quite different ways.

Informal Parent Education. Finally, in some programs efforts at parent education were minimal, involving only occasional, informal contacts with parents. Sometimes these centered around progress reports (conferences and report cards) and teachers discussed how they thought the child was faring in school. Other times they were less personal. Newsletters with calendars of events were often used. The objectives of these informal activities were unclear and their importance and effect hard to determine. Moreover, they varied tremendously from LEA to LEA and from grade to grade.

9.4 Issues of Implementing Parent Education Projects

While parent education projects are widely supported by practitioners and researchers in early childhood education, in operation they are not without problems. First, particularly where parent education is an add-on to the broader education effort, there tend to be no clear objectives -- whether because of lack of time or inability to reach consensus. The consequence is that many parent education projects are difficult if not impossible to evaluate.

Second, and related to the lack of clarity of objectives, there is a general paucity of good material to direct project efforts. We met repeated requests for information and material for use with parents. Some material is of course being disseminated, particularly by programs validated by the Joint Dissemination and Review Panel initiated by the Office of Education. We were amazed, however, by how few programs knew about this and by how rarely they were used. Instead, we observed a great deal of local effort being put into the development of teaching material for use with parents.

In the minds of many people interviewed, the success or failure of parent education efforts within ECT I programs seems to depend as much on who is organizing them as on their specific objectives and the material they use. For example, in one LEA where the parent education component consisted in parent group meetings not unlike those seen elsewhere, LEA representatives and our field research team stressed the skill and the dynamic quality of the coordinator. The field report noted:

> This is where the LEA shines! They have a dynamite parent-involvement coordinator who works with teachers and PACs. She has a BA in social work and is clearly trained in group leadership skills. She is a spirited, imaginative and delightful young lady with lots of initiative and ideas. She is appreciated for her "up front" and somewhat assertive manner. She gets regular feedback on the success of the program from building meet-

> ings and whether or not people come back again. She sees her role as providing coordination of activities and information for parents and really gets into the community.

Clearly the training and experience of this program coordinator go beyond knowledge of child development and early education. She seems well suited to the task of working with adults. In other LEAs, parent education activities were conducted by individuals who were warm and sensitive but who had little or no formal training in working with adults. We can only speculate, of course, but it seems entirely possible that those who are excellent teachers of young children are not always the best teachers of parents.

Another issue, particularly germane to the delivery of home-visit projects, is that of program accountability. It is difficult to assure that what actually happens in home visits is consistent with the project objectives. While in principle project directors can accompany teachers on home visits (and some of them do), this is a potential intrusion into the home-visit process. Moreover, it is very time-consuming. Given the level of funding of many of these projects and the limited time of supervisory personnel, direct supervision is often simply not possible.

More generally, poor attendance and high attrition plague most parent education efforts. The reasons for this are not clear but a number of possibilities were suggested. First, in many communities the Title I population is a highly mobile one. In parent education, the problems of attendance and attrition can be especially severe, for even in families who do not move from place to place, more and more mothers are entering the labor force. For example, in one community that sincerely wanted to develop a parent education component to complement its kindergarten program, it was discovered that mothers of sixty-six of the eighty eligible children were employed outside the home.

Scheduling parent education activities during the working day was futile, and evening or weekend sessions would have placed unacceptable burdens on the teaching staff. It was not clear whether parents would have found the latter acceptable either, or viewed it as another task in an already too crowded schedule.

9.5 Parent Participation

Parent participation takes two forms in Title I. First, some LEAs stress the involvement of parents as resources to the program. Parents often serve as aides in the classroom. This had the combined effect of providing additional adult resources for children and enabling parents to observe activities appropriate for young children. They could also observe their own child's ability to function in the school setting and evaluate programs. Other LEAs drew upon parents' special talents. In several sites, a number of parents had worked together to build playgrounds. In others they made costumes and props and helped with dramatic presentations and holiday celebrations.

Parents were also exploited as a valuable political resource by many program officials. In at least one SEA and several LEAs, they were frequently mobilized to write to congressmen and senators to support or oppose legislation that might affect Title I funding and programs. The director of one state educational agency expressed pride in his ability to recruit large numbers of parents for this purpose. Some LEA program directors thought that the commitment of parents to their program was a significant political force within the community and helped to assure their portion of local allocations for early childhood programs. It was difficult to assess these functions in the sites we visited, but those who spoke of them were so convinced of their efficacy that it would be remiss not to mention them.

Title I explicitly states that parent participation must be encouraged by providing adequate means for parents to determine needs and plan and evaluate programs. The vehicles for meeting that requirement are parent advisory councils, both district and school. Because these are mandated components, they are frequently subject to official scrutiny. Since PACs and their role in local Title I activities often raise sensitive issues of compliance, we did not directly pursue this line of inquiry in our research. Personnel seemed concerned that we understand that they were complying with regulations and therefore tended to describe PAC activities in a rather formal fashion.

Nevertheless, some interesting findings did emerge. First, all of the sites that we visited did have parent advisory councils at both the LEA and the school level, and reportedly fulfilled the requirements of Title I. In some LEAs, PAC activities seemed to conform more to the letter of the law than to its spirit. PAC meetings were pro forma, focusing on the provisions of the act and its regulations, and fulfilling PAC responsibilities for needs assessment, evaluation, and program planning. In other LEAs, however, PAC meetings were a vehicle for personal growth and served to build a sense of community within the group of ECT I parents. For example, they provided training in leadership development and the use of parliamentary procedure, ways to understand and use evaluation information, and techniques of writing proposals and reports. The PAC thus sometimes served for parent education as well as parent participation.

9.6 Summary

Parent education in ECT I projects takes many forms. In most cases the goals are to improve children's school readiness and academic performance by teaching parents to teach their children. The importance of parent involvement

in the education process is also stressed. There is more emphasis on the education of parents of young children than of parents of children in higher grade levels. This is partly due to administrative and scheduling logistics. As ECT I programs become components of larger educational efforts, making staff time available for parent activities becomes increasingly difficult.

Program personnel in LEAs that have parent education projects are convinced of the efficacy of such efforts. They feel that the children of parents who participate have better attitudes toward and do better in school. They also are convinced that parents are better able to use school resources and to function as advocates for their children. However, evaluating these activities with any precision is hampered by both logistic and technical constraints. We will turn to these in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 10. EVALUATING PARENT INVOLVEMENT

10.1 Introduction

10.2 General Issues in Evaluating Parent Education Projects

10.3.1 Assessing Short-Term Impact on Children

10.3.2 Assessing Long-Term Impact on Children

10.3.3 Assessing Impact on Parents

10.4 Evaluating Parent Participation

10.4.1 Informal Participation

10.4.2 Parent Advisory Councils

10.5 Summary

10.1 Introduction

In chapter 9, we divided parent involvement into two functions: parent education and parent participation. We will maintain that distinction in this chapter. First we discuss some general issues in evaluating parent education projects. Then we look at current evaluation practices for parent education projects within ECT I. Finally, we describe evaluation of the several forms of parent participation.

10.2 General Issues in Evaluating Parent Education Projects

The purpose of most parent education projects, particularly those funded under Title I, is to have a positive influence on children. Parent educators strive to improve parental competence and attitudes so that children may reap the advantages. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the children of parents who participate in these activities will be measurably more advanced than those whose parents do not participate. To test this, most parent education projects have evaluated short-term effects on the child (see Goodson and Hess, 1975, 1976, for reviews of some of these evaluations). The results for the most part suggest that parent education projects can promote immediate short-term gains for children. Parent educators in many projects, however, argue that this is only half of the story. Since the objectives of parent education include improved parenting, teaching, and advocacy skills of parents, change in parent behavior should also be assessed. To develop a true picture of the project and its impact, effects on both children and their parents must be examined.

Second, the issue of short-term versus long-term gain was raised repeatedly. Many parent education projects strive to increase parental knowledge

and understanding of their children as well as parental behavior with them. Effecting such change, project personnel held, is a long-term goal, and it is unrealistic to expect to see differences in narrow academic areas after only a few months. Moreover, for these changes to be reflected in differences in parents' daily behavior that in turn might lead to child growth and development is still another step removed. Therefore, a number of program staff members argued for longitudinal evaluations, even acknowledging their logistic constrints.

A third, closely related issue was the scope of the evaluation effort. We have described ECT I parent education projects that aspired to change parent knowledge, attitudes, and functioning toward the child and the school. Then, if those changes can be defined and measured (and it is by no means clear that this can be done adequately), program personnel expect still further change: they expect spin-off in at least two ways. First, personnel in projects focusing on the parent-child relationship are convinced that parents should be able to understand and deal better with not only the ECT I child, but also any other children in the household. Second, those emphasizing the parent-school relationship look for increased skill in using community services, not only school resources. Nevertheless, none of the projects we visited conducted any formal evaluation in these two areas.

Finally, the old nemesis, instrumentation, reappeared. All of the problems and limitations of tests and the problems of testing young children apply here. (The interested reader is referred to chapters 4 and 6 of this report, chapter 18 of Bryk, et al., 1978, and chapter 5 of Haney, et al., 1978, for detailed discussions of these issues.) They are compounded by the paucity of tests for measuring parent growth. The most frequent complaint we heard

from program and evaluation personnel alike was that they had no valid way of measuring program impact on parents. There simply are no standardized tests, and few widely used ones, for measuring changes in parents that might be due to participation in parent education projects.

10.3 Evaluation of Parent Education in ECT I Projects

In chapter 9, we distinguished among types of parent education projects within ECT I: those that were independent projects, those that were a separate but complementary component of a larger program, and those that involved only informal contacts between parents and teachers. That division is useful in reviewing evaluation activities. The more central parent education was to the purpose of the program, the more concerned the staff were about evaluating it. In projects where parent education was informal and clearly secondary to direct intervention with children, evaluation at most consisted of frequency counts of parent-teacher contacts and perhaps a brief description of teacher-parent meetings. In projects whose raison d'être was parent education or where a parent education effort supplemented programs with children, much emphasis was placed on documenting what was being done for families and developing ways to improve program practice.

Although personnel interest in evaluation was high in the latter group of projects, efforts were often thwarted by various logistic and technical problems.

10.3.1 Assessing Short-Term Impact on Children. It was the unanimous position of SEA officials and local personnel that all Title I programs, including parent education projects, must demonstrate improved child performance in the short term. Therefore, every parent education project we visited evaluated short-term effects on children. These required evaluations were

almost identical to those conducted for the more child-focused ECT I projects. Most used a pretest-posttest design. A few used a posttest only. Evaluations were usually conducted for program recipients only, although two LEAs, interested in comparing the efficacy of center-based, child-focused prekindergarten projects and home-based parent education, compared the performance of children in the two projects. One of these LEAs also used a control group of Title I-eligible children who were receiving no treatment. Many of the tests described in chapter 4 were used, although several projects, particularly those serving three-year-olds,[1] developed their own evaluation checklists for use with young children.

We should emphasize that the structure of these evaluation efforts emerged from what were generally perceived to be Title I requirements. Project goals might be quite broad (see for example section 9.3 of chapter 9). But curiously, parent education projects reported formal objectives such as the following:

> 70% of the four-year-olds enrolled reached national norms on the Caldwell Cooperative Preschool Inventory and are thus better prepared to enter and successfully complete kindergarten.

Our observations confirmed, however, that actual activities were consistent with the broader perspective.

The evaluation requirement creates a somewhat unusual situation for projects. Since they must formulate objectives such as those stated and must be assessed in terms of those objectives, many of them must modify their components in order to assure progress along these lines. They do this despite their belief that child skill development in the long term results not so much

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[1] The reader is referred to chapter 6, Table 6.1, for a listing of the tests used by the LEAs in our sample to measure child outcomes.

from such skill-and-drill exercises but from more fundamental parent education efforts. Nevertheless, most projects reported that they had achieved their short-term child-outcome objectives and therefore considered their project successful. In the few cases where objectives were not achieved, comparison of objectives and test results usually resulted in changed objectives. In some cases, program modifications also occurred. For example, one LEA shifted from a home-based prekindergarten project to one that was center-based. Another moved from a prekindergarten for three- and four-year-olds to one serving only four-year-olds.

10.3.2 Assessing Long-Term Impact on Children. Although most program personnel were sure that children of parents participating in parent education projects were being positively affected by them, they feared that requirements to evaluate short-term effects on the child might divert attention from more important long-range objectives. Particularly among projects stressing the importance of parental attitudes toward the child and his education, the links between parental change and change in child functioning were thought to be too complex to be captured by achievement scores at any given time. For example, personnel in several LEAs argued that helping parents understand their child's capabilities and interests would encourage them to develop a more stimulating and interesting home environment. Parents might, for example, provide more books or puzzles. This alone, however, will not teach the child to read or enable him to understand the relationships between objects. The process of effecting changes in parental functioning that eventually affect child experience takes time. Nevertheless, these outcomes are valued because they are likely to be deep-seated and lasting. For example, reading to preschool children should do more than teach them a few letters or words; it

should change attitudes and motivation and have broad and long-range implications for learning (Chall, 1967; Durken, 1966).

Pursuing this logic, program personnel in several LEAs expressed interest in longitudinal evaluations that would allow them to follow children over several years in order to assess differences in the children of participating and non-participating parents. As Bryk, et al. (1978) point out, however, there are often immense logistic problems with longitudinal evaluation. In fact, we found only one site in which it had been successfully undertaken. Thus, parent education projects, like so many other ECT I programs, face a real dilemma -- objectives that they believe are important but for which they cannot demonstrate success, given the state of the art in evaluation and the state-of-the-pocketbook in most LEAs.

10.3.3 Assessing Impact on Parents. While the major concern of ECT I parent education projects was with evaluating effects in the child, LEA personnel were almost unanimous in wanting to assess the impact on parents. In several projects, attempts were being made to do this. The areas most frequently cited as targets for evaluation were parent knowledge of child development, parent attitudes toward their children, and educational quality of the home environment and parent-child interaction. Unfortunately, there were impediments to such evaluations. Chief among them were the technical quality of the few tests available and the difficulty and expense of other procedures.

Both LEA and SEA representatives were frustrated by their inability to find good tests to measure program impact on parents. This concern is also reflected in the literature. The problem seems to be less that tests are scarce than that there is almost an excess of locally developed tests, observation

scales, and questionnaires for which little or no attempt has been made to establish standards of reliability or validity. Goodson and Hess (1976) reviewed studies on a number of parent education projects and remarked that they found few standardized tests for measuring parent behavior at home. Heyneman and Mintz (1977) found a larger number of locally developed, fairly specialized tests that were scattered throughout the research literature and often observed in local program descriptions. For all intents and purposes, these are unavailable to ECT I practitioners. Similarly, Lindsay (1976), in examining all basic research involving parents that was funded by ACYF in 1976, found an incredible diversity of tests in use. Included were parent attitude scales, tests to measure knowledge about child development and scales to assess the quality of the home environment, structured/semi-structured interviews, natural observations, and observations in structured settings. We found only a few of these in use.

Checklists. Several LEAs had developed their own parent attitude scales or had modified scales from other projects to meet their own needs. These were questionnaires, filled out by parents at the beginning and end of the academic year, designed to tap parents' knowledge of child development, child management skills, expectations of their child, and attitudes toward childrearing. Only a few scales were used by more than one project. One was the Parent as a Teacher Inventory (PAAT) developed by Strom and Slaughter (1976). The PAAT is a composite attitude scale that purports to assess parents' feelings about various aspects of childrearing, their standards for assessing the importance of various aspects of child behavior, and their value preferences in child behavior. Several technical studies (reported in Strom and Slaughter, 1976) indicate that the assessment can be made with reasonable reliability. There are still questions about test validity, however,

and a cursory review raised some questions about possible cultural bias.

Another test used or adapted by more than one project was the Caldwell Inventory of Home Stimulation (STIM). This observation form is filled out by teachers, usually on a pre-post basis, and attempts to assess the adequacy of the home environment in terms of material stimulation (equipment and toys), stimulation of mature behavior, language stimulation, avoidance of restriction and punishment, evidence of pride, affection and thoughtfulness, evidence of masculine presence, and independence from parental control.

Only two other parent evaluation indices were reported in use by more than one LEA. One was developed by the Portage Project, Portage, Wisconsin, and the other by the Seton Hall Project in St. Cloud, Minnesota. So far, we have been unable to obtain copies of either instrument.

Observations. Observational data were also available, particularly from home-based projects where teachers reported changes in parents' attitudes and behavior from visit to visit. This was done, however, for purposes of program implementation more than for evaluation. Teachers used it for subsequent teaching activities. The information, while well suited for that purpose, was of limited usefulness in evaluating overall program impact. In only one LEA had there been any consistent attempt to use the data for program evaluation. In this instance, short case studies had been developed to document the kinds of impact the program was having on families. Staff observations were supplemented by parent opinions as expressed in an evaluation questionnaire completed at the end of the academic year.

Parent questionnaires. By far the most prevalent means of assessing program impact on parents was the parent questionnaire. Almost every project we visited had developed one and used it annually. The simplest question-

naires provided information on the compatibility of program and families. More sophisticated ones attempted to assess changes in parent attitudes and behavior. In most LEAs the information from questionnaires was used as testimonial support for the program. The number of parents reporting positive effects that they attributed to program participation was simply counted. In a few cases these data accompanied project applications. More often they remained at the local level and were reportedly used to plan program improvements.

10.4 Evaluating Parent Participation

10.4.1 Informal Participation. There was almost no evaluation of the more informal aspects of parent participation. In LEAs where parents acted as classroom volunteers, the frequency with which they served was sometimes documented and in a few cases accompanied project applications. More often it was simply a matter between classroom teachers and parents. Many teachers had a cadre of parents whom they relied on for support. These were informally -- but potently, we suspect -- dubbed "involved parents." We saw no attempt to assess the impact of these activities on parents or on children.

Political advocacy was also an unevaluated function. In two LEAs, program directors informally credited parent demonstration activities with reversing administrative decisions to curtail funds for their programs. We were not privy to the factors that bore on these decisions, however, so the issue remains one of speculation.

10.4.2 Parent Advisory Councils. Some evaluations of PAC activities are required by regulation. Each local education agency must include in its application sufficient information to enable the SEA to determine that: each

council member has been given a copy of the Act, the regulations, and detailed state and federal guidelines; all members have been trained to carry out their mandated functions; each council has received what information may be needed for effective involvement in program planning, operation, and evaluation; each council has had adequate time to review the materials; all parents have had access to appropriate PACs; and each PAC has had an opportunity to submit its views to the LEA. Evaluations are conducted to assure the SEA of LEA compliance with these requirements.

Evaluation activities in all the LEAs we visited were descriptive. Counts of the number of PAC meetings held, attendance at them, and membership in PACs were the most frequent. Projects also documented that appropriate persons had received required information. These activities showed that LEAs had fulfilled their legal responsibility.

The evaluations described above make no attempt to assess the impact of PAC activities on parents; they merely confirm that PAC activities occur, without concern about their quality or impact.

On the other hand, we gathered considerable informal information about the efficacy of PAC activities. First, in a number of LEAs PAC representatives met with us to discuss "their" ECT I project. They appeared knowledgeable about the project aims, areas of particular success or unusual change, and the direction they wanted ECT I projects to take. We were struck by the rich information and depth of understanding that parents in some LEAs so clearly displayed.

10. 5 Summary

We have seen that some aspects of parent involvement are evaluated, and that these include parent education. Projects in which parent education

is the main emphasis are, understandably, most concerned that it be adequately evaluated. Most evaluation activity in these projects takes the form of short-term child impact studies. Because of the nature of Title I and its requirements, these evaluations look very much like those for child-centered programs, despite the fact that program goals and activities may be quite different. In order to assure continued funding, projects engage in such evaluations although they may not directly address the purposes of the project as perceived at the local level.

Project personnel in several LEAs expressed the desire for better ways to assess program impact on parents and to measure long-term effects. Logistic and technical constraints, particularly the poor quality of tests and lack of awareness about what is available, impeded efforts in this direction. Project and evaluation personnel were outspoken in requests for assistance in this area. Other aspects of parent involvement were less consistently evaluated. PAC activities were regularly chronicled. Informal parent participation was seldom assessed.

In conclusion, however, we should note that while the diversity of ECT I programs may present challenges--in program administration, coordination with other programs, and especially in evaluation--it may also represent a real strength. As our literature review shows, many of the programs identified as exemplary on the basis of systematic evaluation were ECT I programs. Indeed, their number is disproportionately large when compared with the proportion of Title I resources going into early childhood programs. This may be due to several different factors, such as characteristcs of early childhood tests and instruments, or the nature of child development. But it may also reflect the fact that the diversity apparent among ECT I programs has made it

possible to match programs to the particular needs of local communities and the specific needs of different groups of educationally deprived children. Thus, despite all the administrative and evaluation problems which it may cause, this diversity should be viewed as an important, real and potential strength of Title I efforts at the early childhood level. It should not be constrained lightly, however attractive it might be to do so for the sake of administrative or evaluative efficiency.

APPENDIX A: A SUMMARY OF MAJOR INFORMATION CATEGORIES FOR DATA COLLECTION

Outline for Summarizing Data

I. Context of the Program

A. Give name of program, address, telephone number, and names and postions of administrative, program, and evaluation personnel.

B. Describe the demographic characteristics and the city or local area.

C. Are there any relevant political circumstances?

D. Is there anything of historical interest (e.g., recent changes in staff, reorganization of responsibilities, introduction of new programs)?

E. Describe any unusual circumstances that might affect what you see (e.g., a storm, teacher absent).

F. Describe (perhaps obtain an organizational chart) the administrative structure of the LEA (SEA) and designate the location of the ECT I programs.

II. Description of Programs

A. Program Structure

1. How is the program organized?

a. Home-based

b. Independent-classroom-based

c. Supplemental classroom activities/material

d. Pull-out.

2. What grade levels are included? Which did you visit?

3. How old are the children enrolled?

4. How many classes are there in the program?

5. How many did you visit?

B. Curriculum

1. Describe the curriculum. (If it is written, try to obtain a copy).

2. What appears to be the main emphasis?

3. Is a particular curriculum model used?

   a. What?

   b. In what area?

4. In a program with more than one classroom, how is consistency maintained? (Who supervises?)

5. Has the curriculum (or other aspects of the program) remained fairly constant, or has it changed since it was introduced?

C. Classroom Organization

1. What physical resources are available?

   a. How is the space arranged? What program content areas are there?

   b. What kinds of material are available?

      1. Are they used?

      2. How?

   c. Does the classroom material reflect the ethnic, cultural, and language backgrounds of the children?

2. What kinds of teaching methods are used?

   a. Large group instruction?

   b. Small group instruction?

   c. Individual instruction?

   d. Independent work?

   e. Any combination of these?

a. Staff interaction

b. Curriculum consistency

c. Shared facilities

3. Is there a state compensatory education law?

a. What services does it provide? How much?

b. For whom?

c. What is the relationship with Title I programs?

4. What other programs are being implemented? How do Title I programs interact with:

a. Title XX

b. Head Start

c. Title IV

d. Other?

III. Selection Procedures

A. How are children selected? (Specify procedures and instruments used.)

B. How are eligibility and selection for Title I EC programs conditioned by other available local, state, and federal programs?

C. How are selection procedures decided?

D. What recruitment procedures are used?

1. Do they reach all Title I eligible children?

2. Why or why not?

E. What needs assessment procedures and tests are used? (If they are written, try to obtain a copy.)

F. Who administers it?

G. When?

H. How are the results used?

I. How amenable to experimental manipulation (e.g., randomization) are selection procedures?

J. Are selection tests also used as pretests in a pre-posttest evaluation?

IV. Parent Involvement

A. To what extent and how are parents involved? Do they participate in:

1. Program development?
2. Program administration?
3. Classroom activities and instruction?
4. Program evaluation?
5. Parent education classes?

B. Is this changing? How? Why?

C. Is this different from other programs?

D. Are there defined goals and objectives for parents?

1. What are they?
2. How are they determined?
3. How responsive are they to individual family circumstances (e.g., working mothers)?

E. How is parent participation evaluated?

1. What procedures are used?
2. How is participation measured?
3. How is impact assessed?

F. How is the PAC organized?

1. What are its functions?
2. How many parents participate?

G. How much communication occurs between program staff and parents? How does it occur?

V. Current Evaluation Procedures

A. What evaluation procedures are used?

1. What designs are used?
2. How are data collected?
3. How are they analyzed?

B. How is evaluation organized?

1. Who does the evaluation?
2. What training and experience does the evaluator have?
3. What resources are available?

C. What tests are used?

1. Why were they chosen?
2. How adequately do they reflect the program objectives?
3. How satisfactory are they, and why?

D. Are other kinds of data besides test scores collected during evaluation?

E. Are there any problems in implementing evaluation procedures? Are there particular design or analysis criteria that cannot be met?

1. Do the procedures overburden program personnel?

F. Is adequate evaluation assistance available?

1. From whom?
2. In what form?

G. What are the staff's attitudes toward evaluation?

1. Do they see current evaluation procedures as useful?
2. How do they view evaluators?

3. Has there been any experience with the RMC models?

4. How are they viewed?

VI. Users and Uses of Information

A. How is evaluation information used?

1. By whom?

2. In what form (e.g., statistical analyses, executive reports)?

3. When?

4. How?

5. Who else has access to this information?

B. Information for Program Decisions

1. Who has responsibility for program decisions?

2. What types of decision do they make?

3. On what basis do they make these decisions?

4. What kinds of information do they use?

5. Is this information adequate?

C. Parents and Teachers

1. What kinds of program and evaluation information does each group get?

2. How do they use it?

D. What kind of information from outside the LEA (SEA) has influenced your thinking about the program?

1. From where (e.g., articles, newspapers, experts, JDRP, NDN, direct contact with other programs)?

2. Who uses the information?

3. How is it used?

VII. Needs, Capacities, and Incentives for Additional Evaluation Information

A. What other kinds of information do people in the LEA (SEA) want?

B. In what form should it be provided?

C. Are there kinds of information that should not be provided?

D. How would the additional information be used?

E. If only some program information (description, process, outcome, individual impacts, program improvement) could not be collected, which kind or kinds should have priority and why?

F. What kinds of information (if any) do LEAs (SEAs) want about programs outside their jurisdiction (e.g., other people's concerns, problems, and successes; nature of exemplary programs? How would they want to receive such information (e.g., written reports, PIPs, personal contact)?

APPENDIX B: CLASSIFICATIONS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

To describe the diversity of activities in ECT I programs, we first looked to existing early childhood program classifications to help us summarize efforts in this area. In the early elementary grades, SRI International developed a five-category classification for Follow Through models:

1. Programs with an emphasis on curriculum and teaching methods within the classroom, relying on extensive use of programmed learning, teaching devices, structured curriculum broken into units of learning, and systematic reinforcement and reward.

2. Programs with a strong commitment to human values and special emphasis on the development of non-cognitive areas, such as self-respect, curiosity, and social confidence.

3. Programs that draw from a variety of theoretical positions and select techniques on pragmatic grounds.

4. Self-sponsored projects.

5. Parent-initiated projects.

In 1971, the Center for Educational Policy Research at Harvard University classified Title I elementary education projects as either 1) structured projects or 2) general enrichment projects. Structured projects included those with specific objectives, sequenced instruction, individual diagnosis, and prescription. General enrichment projects are those with multiple program objectives and were simply extensions of typical classroom activities.

White, et al. (1973) developed a three-dimensional taxonomy to organize compensatory education programs. The dimensions used to classify projects and the categories with them are:

Dimension 1: Classroom process

1. Amplification of traditional classroom services
2. Reorganization of classroom process

Dimension 2: Goal orientation

1. Academic achievement
2. Cognitive enrichment
3. Adjustment

Dimension 3: Organizational changes

1. Parent medisted
2. Performance contracting
3. Busing
4. Vouchers

They reported, however, that they were not completely satisfied with the taxonomy, for "all projects do not fit clearly into one level on each dimension and there are no exemplary projects for some categories" (White et al., 1973, Vol. II. p. 12). We found this to be true also of ECT I projects.

At the preschool level, various classification systems have been developed. Kohlberg(1969) distinguished projects by differences in theoretical base. He identified three theoretical positions on human development that influenced preschool program practice and grouped projects accordingly: the environmentalist or behaviorist, the nativist or maturational, and the cognitive developmental.

Bissell (1971) grouped Head Start Planned Variation models by their primary orientation toward learning, specifying both goals and techniques used to achieve goals. Her categories were: 1) pre-academic 2) cognitive discovery, and discovery. Pre-academic projects were those that aspired to foster the development of pre-academic skills by using systematic reinforcement. Cognitive discovery projects were those that sought to promote the growth of basic cognitive processes by providing continuous verbal accompaniment to children's sequenced exploration. Finally, discovery projects sought to encourage learning as part of the humanistic

growth of the "whole child." These projects enccuraged experiences such as free exploration and self-expression.

We found neither approach useful. ECT I projects in practice are neither theoretically pure nor pedagogically consistent.

Several taxonomies for prekindergarten projects use other dimensions. Bissell (1970) classified preschool projects on the basis of their objectives, their strategies, and the extent of their structure, where structure meant the amount of external (teacher) organization and sequencing of the child's activities. A directive strategy is one with a high degree of structure. Her four categories were: 1) permissive enrichment, 2) structural cognitive, 3) structured informational, and 4) structured environment.

Mayer (1971) also distinguished four groups of preschool projects that appear to be comparable, though labels are different. Mayer labels her categories thus: 1) child development, 2) verbal cognitive, 3) verbal didactic, and 4) sensory cogntive. Child development projects are those that aspire to develop the whole child, with emphasis on social and emotional development. The predominant interaction mode is between children. Verbal cognitive projects also try to develop the whole child but emphasize cognitive and language development. Interactions are a balance of child to child and child to teacher. In verbal-didactic projects, the main objective is to transmit academic skills and information. This is done by direct instruction from teacher to child. Finally, sensory cognitive projects seek to develop the whole child but emphasize sensory discrimination and motor abilities. The interaction between child and material is stressed.

Weikart (1972) classified preschool projects by their major goals and by the roles played by teacher and the child. Both can play the role of initiator or responder. Initiating teachers plan, organize, develop, and present material and activities. Responding teachers observe, respond to children's actions, and

facilitate interactions among children and between children and material. Initiating children make choices about activities and interactions and carry out self-developed plans. Responding children are attentive or receptive to the plans and activities of others and work within a structure of defined acceptable behavior. Preschool projects are divided into four categories: 1) child-centered, 2) open frame-work, 3) programmed, and 4) custodial.

Bussis and Chittenden (1970) used a similar structure. Their categories are: 1) open education, 2) traditional British education, 3) programmed instruction, and 4) laissez faire.

Several problems emerged from our review of these classifications. They do not take into account important dimensions on which ECT I programs vary. Also, each focuses on only one or a few characteristics of projects, ignoring many aspects in which they differ. While this may suffice for heuristic purposes, using these classifications for our purposes would result in oversimplification of actual program activities. Since it is our intent to describe ECT I programs fully, this is a very undesirable feature.

In sum, even the more sophisticated classifications of early childhood programs seemed to us inadequate for describing the ECT I projects we observed. Based on written descriptions alone, some of the projects we visited might have been molded to fit particular classifications. The broad diversity in actual program practice, however, made the match uncomfortable. Finally, programs often do not fit neatly into only one classification category. Some logically fall into more than one while others appear to slip between the cracks.

While none of the systems considered was quite adequate for our purposes, the review proved useful. It suggested certain salient variables which, when compared with our field notes, seemed important for any descriptive effort.

APPENDIX C: VARIABLES FOR DESCRIBING ECT I PROJECTS

Grade Level.

1) Prekindergarten. These are all instructional activities that occur during the year or years before entry into kindergarten. They are part of the elementary school program and are under the direction of a professionally qualified teacher. In most cases the classes are for four-year-olds. In some they include activities for two-, three-, and four-year-olds.
2) Kindergarten. These are programs that provide educational experiences for children one year before first grade.
3) First Grade. These are programs that follow kindergarten. They are usually the first step of the required school academic sequence.

Goals and objectives. These refer to overall program purposes as they were listed on program applications and evaluations and described by program personnel.

1) Subject matter objectives are organized into three areas: reading, language arts, and mathematics. Examples of objectives in each are listed in Table C.1.
2) Developmental objectives are organized into broader areas of child development. Different projects use different labels for these, but in general they apply to: (1) the way the child perceives the world (auditory and visual perception); (2) the way the child controls his body and integrates the information from his various senses (gross motor skills, fine motor

Table C.1

Examples of Subject Matter Objectives
Specified by ECT I Projects

Content Area	Objective
Reading	Recognizes and can name letters Recognizes and can say the sounds of letters Recognizes simple words on sight Recognizes words that start with the same sound Recognizes words that end with the same sound
Language arts	Can copy simple geometric shapes Can copy letters Can write simple words Can spell simple words Can tell a short story
Mathematics	Can place objects in order according to shape or size Can match in one-to-one correspondence groups of objects from one to ten Recognizes numerals Matches numerals to corresponding groups Understands concepts of comparison such as big-small; tall-short; high-low; long-short

skills, perceptual motor integration, perceptual motor skills, and psychomotor skills); (3) cognitive status (conceptual development and problem-solving skills); (4) capacity to organize behavior and maintain attention (attention span, task initiation, task directedness, independence, and executive ability; (5) language ability (both expressive and receptive; and (6) social and emotional integrity (self-concept and relationships with others).

Primary Program Recipients. Early childhood practitioners have increasingly urged that programs go beyond the child to include the parents and the family (Gordon, 1969; Levenstein, 1971, 1972). Some research evidence suggests that this may indeed yield sustained program effects (Bronfenbrenner, 1974; Lazar, et al., 1977). A few academicians have even advocated shifting emphasis in early childhood programs from the child to the parent (White, 1973). We divide projects into three groups:

1) Child-centered programs. These are directed only at the child. They may aspire to provide a general range of experiences or to teach the child specific skills to remedy a perceived academic deficiency. The important feature is that most, if not all, of the interaction occurs in the classroom. The instructional staff selects program objectives, determines teaching methods, and then goes about the process of teaching.
2) Parent programs. These are directed only at parents. They try to influence parents' attitudes, knowledge, and behavior towards their children, as well as the relationships with

school structures and personnel. Many emphasize teaching parents to teach their children. Others include instruction in areas such as nutrition, health care, and the use of community resources.

3) Parent-and-child programs. These identify the skills and abilities needed by children for success in school, then devise coordinated instruction programs for both child and parents. For example, the child learns how enjoyable it is to listen to stories and look at picture books. Parents are taught why these experiences are important, helped to select appropriate stories, and shown effective ways to read, dramatize, or otherwise share the material. Or, while children are learning to recognize letters and numerals at school, parents may be encouraged to make or buy similar materials and to "play the games" at home, too.

Program Locus. Early childhood projects may be based in the classroom or learning center, at home, or some combination of the two. The first two categories are self-explanatory. The third includes both regular classes for children and periodic home visits to parents. For purposes of definition we do not include in this category center-based projects that make only occasional home visits to follow up a problem encountered in the classroom. We consider these home visits an element of center-based programs.

Frequency of Sessions. This refers to the number of times per week or month the program meets. Program applications usually specify the planned frequency of home visits or class meetings, though it is often thwarted by the coordinating schedules and by conflicting demand on time. In order to obtain the most accurate picture, we have combined the "official" frequency with what actually takes place as local staff described it to us.

Duration of Sessions. Duration refers to the amount of instruction time

planned for each teaching session. The intervals reported are approximations based on program plans and observations.

Staff-Child Ratio. The ratios of teaching adults to children vary tremendously, not only among programs, but often from day to day within a program. The information in this chapter is based on data from project application and reported by program directors. It reflects the official staff-to-child ratios and is not adjusted for student absenteeism or the presence of parent volunteers.

Instructional Organization. We have identified various ways to organize instruction:

1) Self-contained classrooms. Children and teachers spend most or all of the school day together in a variety of work and play activities. The prototype for the self-contained classroom is the conventional kindergarten program.

2) Supplementary sessions. These programs provide additional instruction time for Title I children. The extended day programs, particularly at the kindergarten and first-grade levels, are excellent examples. In these programs district-funded classes are held for half a day (usually the morning), and additional afternoon sessions are provided for Title I children. The latter may be used to provide additional remedial instruction in areas of demonstrated deficiency (e.g., reading, language, and arithmetic). If so, instruction is consistent with the primary education program. Classes in supplementary sessions are often smaller than in the regular sessions and thus form a lower teacher-to-child ratio.

3) Pull-out programs. Selected children are regularly removed ("pulled out") from their regular classroom periods (usually for less than an hour). The purpose of these activities is to provide direct instruc-

tion in specific academic areas in response to a demonstrated need. In theory the pull-out time should supplement instruction in the same area as part of the child's regular school program; the instructional objectives of the two programs should be consistent. In fact, coordination of effort between classroom teacher and Title I pull-out teacher is often a major problem.

4) Floating teachers. Instead of taking Title-I-eligible children from their classes, some programs send an instruction specialist to the classroom. This specialist, or "floating teacher," visits a given number of classes at a specified frequency, and instructs Title I children while other class members continue their work with the classroom teacher or aide.

5) Resource rooms. In some schools special areas have been set aside as resource rooms (often called reading or mathematics laboratories). These are specially equipped with material relevant to the subject area. They are staffed by a resource teacher and not infrequently by a resource aide. Classes visit the resource room regularly. The difference between this and a pull-out program is that the entire class visits the resource room. While there, Title I children may receive remedial instruction from the resource room teacher without the potential stigma of being removed from classroom activities.

6) Home visits. Some programs eschew classroom activities altogether. In some prekindergarten programs and almost all programs for very young children (three-year-olds), teachers regularly visit parents and children at home. These visits usually include instruction for the child and the parent.

7) Parent groups. These may be discussion and/or instruction sessions. They allow parents to talk with other parents and offer the possibility

of mutual support as well as instruction. Parent groups are often established as an adjunct to other program activities (e.g., home visits or classroom instruction).

Title I Instruction Staff. We identified the following staff roles:

1) Teachers. Trained and certified in elementary or preschool education, the teacher has much the same role as in non-Title-I programs. She is responsible for planning the education program for the class, adapting it to meet the needs of individual children, and teaching it. She supervises the work of teaching aides and communicates the special needs of eligible children to Title I and other support staff. Other tasks may include conferring with parents, conducting parent groups, and making home visits. Often the teacher administers and scores tests and participates in decisions about selection of children for Title I or other special programs.

2) Classroom aides. Aides are usually but not always paraprofessionals. The tasks they perform and their professional stature vary greatly from program to program.

3) Special-subject teachers. Special-subject teachers are not responsible for total classroom instruction but rather serve as a resource for classroom teachers. They provide supplementary instruction in pull-out programs or by working with Title I children in their classrooms.

4) Special-subject aides. These aides assist the special-subject teacher. They perform many of the same functions, but under supervision.

5) Resource teachers. These teachers work in a central resource center or laboratory. Tasks include identifying and obtaining appropriate instruction material, planning educational activities, and reviewing diagnostic results.

6) Resource center aides. These are paraprofessional aides who assist the resource teacher.

7) Home visitors. These are teachers, either professional or paraprofessional, who visit parent and child at home for purposes of instruction.

APPENDIX D: GUIDE TO ACRONYMS/INITIALS USED IN THIS REPORT

ACYF....Administration for Children, Youth and Families

CRT.....criterion-referenced tests

CTBS....Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTB/McGraw-Hill, 1968-73)

DDST....Denver Developmental Screening Test (Frankenburg, et al., 1968-70)

ECT I...Early Childhood Title I

ERIN....(Project ERIN) Early Recognition and Intervention Network

ESEA....Elementary and Secondary Education Act

IEP.....individual education plan

LEA.....local education agency

NCE.....normal curve equivalent

NIE.....National Institute of Education

PAAT....Parent as Teacher Inventory

PAC.....Parent Advisory Council

PPVT....Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test

RMC.....Research Management Corporation

SEA.....state education agency

STIM....Caldwell Inventory of Home Stimulation

TAC.....Technical Assistance Center

TOBE....Test of Basic Experiences (Moss, 1970-72)

USED....U.S. Education Department

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